

The

ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

REVIEW

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CHILDREN'S BOOKS ABOUT DEMOCRACY

Margaret Thomsen Raymond

POETRY WRITING WITH CHILDREN

Doris Jackson

WE VIEW LATIN AMERICA THROUGH BOOKS

Wilhelmina Hill

CONTEXT AIDS IN READING

Constance M. McCullough

WRITING INTERESTS OF SEVEN-YEAR-OLDS

Agnes G. Gunderson

The Elementary English Review

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JOHN J. DEBOER, *Editor*

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THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

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Issues and Reflections

The New World We Build

Our ultimate enemy is cynicism.

Great religions, great social movements, our own great adventure in democracy, are built upon a great faith.

The voice of self-criticism is a friendly voice—the voice of America, heard in Paine, Lowell, Whittier, Whitman, Bellamy, Steffens, Sinclair, Steinbeck. Such criticism is born of a vision of what our nation can and will be.

The voice of the cynic is the voice of doom. It speaks today, in the midst of desperate, bloody war, in Nazi or native accents, daily seeking to undermine confidence in our gallant allies, in our own people, in our own industrial workers whose sons and brothers are fighting in the far corners of the earth, in our own elected government. It is the voice of our mortal enemy.

Today's cynic is the defeatist in America's war against fascism and the enemy of our hope for a new world. He speaks in scores of newspaper editorials throughout the land, deriding the people's peace for which Willkie, Wallace, Milo Perkins, and Sumner Welles have told us

we are fighting. He is telling us that starry-eyed idealism will plunge the American people into disillusionment when the postwar era brings only the promise of new wars.

The cynic's words present a problem in semantic analysis. Does he mean that we already know American blood is being shed in vain? Let him tell that to American gold-star mothers. But he does not speak in clear, direct language. The cynic knows he cannot be accepted if he reveals himself. He labels himself a realist, but he conceals the fact that this "realism" proclaims the futility not only of anti-fascist struggle, but of life itself.

Teaching the language arts in wartime is not a mere matter of teaching correct usage. It means teaching the use of language as a weapon for freedom. Loose, idle talk, not merely the talk about ship movements and troop movements, but the irresponsible conversation which perpetuates prejudice against workers, against Jews and Negroes and other cultural minorities, is a powerful weapon against us. As the Axis fails on the battlefield, it increasingly uses the strategy of the whispering campaign of cynicism. Teach-

ers of the language arts need now to launch a counter-offensive by teaching the language of faith—and of action.

Elementary school teachers in many places are already taking the lead. In panels and in large group discussions they are studying the problems of the war and the peace to follow, with a competence which many adult groups might emulate. Uncorrupted youth have the capacity for faith in the people's ultimate triumph.

The world of language communication to which we must introduce our youth is today a confusing mass of truths, half-truths, lies, appeals, admonitions, and arguments, conveyed by radio, newsreels, photoplay, newspaper, picture magazine, billboard, public lecturer, and the informal conversation of friends and acquaintances. The mind of the typical listener reflects the confusion. Coming from schools more intent upon respectable usage than upon clarity of understanding and purpose, he becomes a ready victim of the tyranny of words, and speaks and votes and acts in such contradictory ways as to conceal his usefulness in the people's struggle.

If democracy wins—on the battle-fronts, in chancelleries, in the Congress, in the minds of the people themselves—there will be a new world to build. Neither we nor the youth who go forth from our classes can afford to face the challenge of the post-war years with a

mass of confusions. We shall need singleness of mind, singleness of faith and purpose. For this reason we need in our schools today a key, a touchstone, a standard, a comprehensive discipline to lend cohesion and focus to our sprawling, aimless curriculum.

Many teachers have found the key in the American tradition, expressed in the words of our great writers and orators and statesmen. It is the revolutionary tradition of the steady advance of the common man toward political freedom, economic security, and cultural achievement. Today's war is one of the great crises in this upward struggle.

World War II represents a merging of America's own aspirations for a greater liberty with mankind's long march toward the outposts of the Free World. We do not speak the language of the Chinese, the Russians, or the Latin Americans, but technology has made us their overnight neighbors. Today we stand with them against the hosts of darkness, and tomorrow we join them in fashioning the patterns of a lasting peace in some kind of World Commonwealth. The language we teach in the new school must be of a universal coinage that will convey the aspirations and impulses of all the people, of nations which the old school knew only as names in the days of sail-boat geography.

—JOHN J. DE BOER

Touchstones and Yardsticks for Teachers in a Democracy

MARGARET THOMSEN RAYMOND

A writer of children's books tells of the rôle that books may play in recapturing for children the spirit of America and rebuilding for modern society the qualities needed for new crises. Miss Raymond is author of A BEND IN THE ROAD, LINNET ON THE THRESHOLD, PRAIRIE DOG TOWN and numerous other books for children.

—Editor.

During the past summer I did a voluminous amount of reading of world history and somewhere among those many pages I came across the perfect opening gambit for this article. Unacademic soul that I am, however, I cannot trace the quotation to volume, chapter and verse. As nearly as I can recall it the comment ran thus:

"George Washington," the writer said, "could never have become king of America because he had read Plutarch." That sentence stopped me in the middle of a page and for a while I read no more, but let my thoughts go wandering over the past, so profoundly influenced by the writings of a little handful of peoples on the shores of the Mediterranean. And I saw in my mind's eye the many columned homes and public buildings of our Founding Fathers, and recalled with refreshed understanding the spaciousness of their thoughts and the noble republican sentiments that were crystallized in the public speeches—for I too "had read Plutarch."

Books Supplied The Inspiration

These men, steeped as they were in the classics and traditions of an earlier world, were a part, too, of the expanding world of their own day. A recent exhibition of the magazines published in America before 1800 gives ample proof of this, for here were scientific monographs, political comment, and an enlarging world-view that was fairly comparable with similar periodicals of the mother country. Their pamphlets were even more thought-provoking, for in them the seeds were planted that grew at last into the sturdy growths of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution itself, and above all the Bill of Rights that limited and defined the powers of those who should rule a united people.

Although one cannot ignore the tremendous pressure of economic and political necessity or the other historical forces in this break with English rule, one cannot help recognizing that it was from their reading that the Founding Fathers knew what an ideal democracy was like: that it was a society in which there should be neither arrogance nor cringing, and where social intercourse was to be based on mutual respect, on the worth and dignity of the common man.

This ideal democracy has never yet existed anywhere on earth; but the men and women fit to inhabit it have already been evolved. They live and move and have their being in the tales of men of the classic world, in Plutarch and Hero-

dotus and Marcus Aurelius. We see them among the knights and squires and we learn of them from the accounts of the humanitarians and philosophers, the artists and poets and even the iconoclasts. They live in every time and in every land. These men and women are the yardsticks by which we measure our own limitations; they are the touchstones by which we expand our own lives to be greater than the circumstances that hedge us about and by which we are released from the burdens of flesh and mind that so inhibit us. And so we, too, learn to be citizens of that larger world of Freemen that shall someday span the earth.

To draw inspiration from such lives and to pass on that inspiration to the children we teach, we need a key—the key of reading. Not just the ability to read, nor even the ability to read for pleasure and excitement or to drift off to sleep; but the courage to read that which is beyond us—the difficult, the abstract, and even the abstruse. The teacher who can only develop in her pupils a tool for deciphering road signs and instruction sheets and does not give them this broader horizon as a goal has only half fulfilled her task.

These are big words. And we must begin with very little children. But no child learning to read and understand the written word is too young to have his mind expanded by great thoughts and great deeds, by tales and poetry implicit with goodness and beauty and truth.

Big Ideas For Little People

In *The Elementary School Journal* for January, 1943, is an article by Arthur Abbott on "Primers for Fascists and Democrats." Behind our horror that little children must be indoctrinated with war fever and hatred to make them fit citizens

for the super-State, there lingers an uneasy admiration for people who use primers to give children larger ideas than we think they are ready for in this country or in England. The comparison is mine; not Mr. Abbott's. These books are not concerned with Betty and Betty's kitty; with Bobby and Bobby's ball—"and a lot more of that stuff," as a six-year-old of some astuteness remarked as he quickly turned several pages of a reader to get at the meat of the story. Their educators are concerned with big ideas and they dare to present them in form assimilable by little children.

It is a feeble people indeed who cannot learn from their enemies. If we are going to face such enemies, we must begin where they do: with strengthening the minds and hearts of little children. And we must do it through daring ourselves to face realities of the world in which these children live. The moving-picture, the radio, the newspaper have made them tough; we must give them ideas that make them resilient and without fear because the right is on their side.

The glorious thing about it—the great challenge to our teaching—is that we have so much braver a world to offer the children of America and to the democracies everywhere than have the philosophers of the Nazi and Fascist states. For we believe in man's ability to co-operate and to live together peaceably through a power that he finds within himself, not through an order that is imposed upon him from without by force.

What books, then, shall we take down from the shelves for our children to read? What stories shall we tell them from the wealth of our cultural heritage, we who are the heirs of all men everywhere for the first time in the history of the world!

The generation that has seen children's books change from drab mediocrity to brilliant beauty, from moralistic sermonizing to implicit understatement is almost too glutted with riches. Among so many books who but a specialist is capable of picking and choosing? Yet I believe that here again are touchstones and yardsticks for every teacher, whether she is selecting books for the first or seventh graders, whether for an elementary or a high school.

First there is form and content: the story must be well written and nobody can write well unless *he has something to write about*. A little West Sider of very limited intelligence and background brought a book from the shelf for me to read aloud to her. Undoubtedly she had chosen it because it had delightful illustrations. In the midst of my reading she walked away saying "I don't think that's vurry inturrestin'," and I agreed with her. It was a smattering of information drawn from innumerable perfectly sound sources, but the events had been set down without any sense of the logic of incident and the flow of good style that makes all the difference between sloppy writing and literature.

Sentences may be of the "simple" sort; the ideas may be absorbing and astonishing only to the six-year-old mind; but the book must have form and content equal to the material it presents and to the illustrations that decorate it. Compare such a book as *The Dutch Twins*¹ with any of the "Little Cousin from" Series, and mark the difference in the preciseness of the detail, the warm friendliness of the relations between grown-ups and children, and the sense of what is understandable by little children.

¹By Lucy Fitch Perkins. Houghton, Boston, 1924.

Once agreed that the books we choose must be well-written, we can then set up for ourselves the criteria of what ideals and aspirations of a democracy we wish to instil in our elementary school children, what kinds of stories will help to establish those concepts, and what stories are within the elementary school child's comprehension. Since most of these concepts cannot be established before the middle years, the examples are mostly chosen for that group. This is in no sense another booklist—heaven knows, there've been enough of those made!—but a pattern for making that much more useful tool, your own list.

Children as we know cannot generalize easily. Even seventh and eighth graders must not be asked, "What books have given you a better idea of democracy?" and be left to themselves to work out an answer. They must have pointed out to them that such books are concerned with the history of our country or tell us of the difference in the peoples who make up our population in the past as in the present; they may tell of co-operation in the family or in the community and so teach us how to co-operate in the world at large; and they may tell of peoples of other times or other lands to give us a wider understanding of our own privileges, rights, functions, and responsibilities in our own land.

Illustrative Titles

Of the many books that teach historical backgrounds of American democracy, *Early American*² is one of the best. This is the life of Paul Revere—but it is much more than just his life. It is the story of an apprentice boy in an earlier day; it is the story of the patriots and the hardships and sufferings of the Siege of Boston; it is

²By Mildred Mastin Pace. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1940.

the simple fortitude of the average man who is made great because his times are great. And it does not end with the winning of the war, but carries the story through the changes that came with the peace and tells how the patriots' faith in their cause was justified.

In studying the Civil War, we must not let children forget that it was another fight for the rights of man and not merely for selfish ends. Experts may differ over other factors and causes, but the cry of Lincoln that "we cannot remain half slave and half free," his Second Inaugural Address, the theme of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* are for the ordinary reader of history the mainspring of that cause—which was the freeing of the Negro from oppression and bondage. This is as potent a force as the economic and political issues and to picture this struggle and to give it reality we may use such books as the *Railroad to Freedom*³ and *A Boy at Gettysburg*.⁴

The years before and after the Civil War were made great by the westward push of the pioneers. Laura Ingalls Wilder has epitomized these struggles and the heroic acceptance by the pioneers of their privations in a series of which *The Long Winter*⁵ particularly appeals to me because of its tapping of primitive experience: man's eternal struggle with his environment. In the piling up and piling up of many snows the brave little family in the village store faces sterner and sterner hardships, and even starvation itself, until that day when spring comes at last.

For those children whose heritage goes back of the nineteenth century, with fore-

³By Hildegard Swift. Harcourt, Brace, New York, 1929.

⁴By Elsie Singmaster. Houghton, Boston, 1924.

⁵By Laura Ingalls Wilder. Harper, New York, 1940.

bears coming on the *Mayflower* or with Penn, or who came when the land was newly freed, we must find books to give them a keener insight into the natures of peoples who came much later, especially that vast immigration of the late Nineteenth Century and early Twentieth Century, before the first World War. Valenti Angelo's *Hill of Little Miracles*,⁶ with its touching story of an Italian colony in California is not only beautiful in content, but in the physical form in which it is presented, for it is one of the most beautiful books of the past few years.

For younger children there is *Up the Hill*,⁷ about a little Polish girl in a mining town in Pennsylvania. Miss DeAngeli has written besides a fine tale of those among us with differing religious beliefs in *Henner's Lydia*,⁸ the daughter of an Amish family, those people who even as I write are being persecuted by their neighbors in America for their hatred of war and their belief in pacifism.

All children of the so-called white race must be given a wider knowledge of children of other races who are also citizens of America; not of "tolerance"—God forgive us for the insufferable word—but of understanding and good will toward our native minorities, the Indian, whose heritage antedates ours, and the Negro, whose people came by our will and not by their own.

Younger children, of course, need to learn of the happy family relations of these peoples. *In My Mother's House*⁹ is a book to warm the heart of any child and to give him a clearer notion about Indians and how beautifully they live.

⁶By Valenti Angelo. Viking, New York, 1939.

⁷By Marguerite De Angeli. Doubleday, Garden City, 1942.

⁸By Marguerite De Angeli. Doubleday, Garden City, 1936.

⁹By Ann Nolan Clark. Viking, New York, 1942.

*Tobe*¹⁰ is a fine and dignified picture of a Negro farm family; let us hope it will be matched some day by an equally wholesome picturebook of a Negro family in a city.

As children grow older they should find struggle and courage in facing life in such books and by implication learn more of what America means to these peoples than can be had from all the textbooks on civics and government and history they will ever study. *Steppin and Family*¹¹ is the story of a Negro boy's ambition to become a tap dancer and how he worked to fulfill that ambition. *Shuttered Window*¹² is of a Negro girl training to be a teacher, seeing in the plight of her own people such a challenge that she was ready for self-sacrifice without mock heroics or sentimentality. One little Negro girl I know brought the book back to the library and said, sadly, "I suppose she just *had* to do it!" learning a lesson of reality from a book that will stand her in good stead all her life long.

Books Of Injustice

The more sensitive child will be ready long before his parents or teachers realize to be moved by injustice and oppression and be ready to do his part in righting wrongs he reads about. Such a boy, who was deeply moved by reading *As Long As The Grass Shall Grow*¹³ by Oliver La Farge—a book that might have been beyond him but for the magnificent photographs of Helen Post that lured him into tackling the straight-forward and sympathetic text—begged his father to let him go to Washington to talk with Mr. Roosevelt. He was sure no one there realized how badly the Indians had been

treated, and he wanted to set them straight himself.

Exploring The Modern World

Reading experience would be only partially fulfilled if the modern world were not examined in our books. The basis of any good society is the soundness of its family relations; and one of the distressing symptoms of the break-up of our society is the disintegration of the family. Not all great men and women have had happy childhoods; often that very lack has given them insight into what the relation should mean, and also a belief that those rights and responsibilities must be preserved if the good life is to be well lived by men in every walk of life.

Such a book as *The Moffats*¹⁴ must illuminate a child's own happy family experiences, just as it must be heartening to the child who feels himself outcast or a misfit. *Little Women*¹⁵ was and still is a heart-warming experience for the older boy and girl in quite the same way.

Nor should American children grow up with an idea that "all's right with the world." One eighth grader to whom I posed my problem instantly named *All-American*¹⁶ as a book that taught him a lot about getting along with all kinds of people. This story, which pictures so vividly the prejudices and intolerance to be met with in an ordinary high school, and how comradeship won the day is carried along by the swiftly-paced, slangy, American sport material that Mr. Tunis knows so well how to handle for boys.

Another girl in the same class named *Blue Willow*¹⁷ to fit into this category of

¹⁰By Stella Gentry Sharpe. University of North Carolina Press, 1939.

¹¹By Hope Newell. Oxford, New York, 1942.

¹²By Florence Crannell Means. Houghton, 1938.

¹³By Oliver La Farge. Alliance, New York, 1940.

¹⁴By Eleanor Estes. Harcourt, Brace, New York, 1941.

¹⁵By Louisa May Alcott. Little Brown, Boston, 1868.

¹⁶By John R. Tunis. Harcourt, Brace, New York, 1942.

¹⁷By Doris Gates. Viking, New York, 1940.

books from which to learn about our responsibilities to others in a democracy. She could not forget, she said, about people not having a regular home, not even a secure place to keep such a simple treasure as a blue willow plate. Perhaps she will not forget when she is grown.

Books Of The World Of Tomorrow

Young democrats of today are going to live in a world quite different from the one in which we grew up. They must know something of co-operation, of working together, and how labor toward a common end makes all men brothers.

"Men work together," I told him from the heart,

"Whether they work together or apart."¹⁸

The books to prepare children for this kind of world are rare, but a beginning has been made: In *Palaces on Monday*¹⁹ they will find that unforgettable scene in which the little American boy shares in the building of the great Moscow subway

¹⁸"The Tuft of Flowers," Robert Frost from *A Boy's Will*. Holt, 1915.

¹⁹By Marjorie Fischer. Random House, New York, 1936.

by helping to paint one of the murals on its walls.

Our children, too, must live in an international scene that will be broader than anything we have experienced. If they have found *Dobry*²⁰ and *Maminka's Children*²¹ at home, they will not be surprised to find *Young Fu*²² and *Nikias*²³ abroad.

And now one last book to stretch the muscles of the mind and challenge the young reader to swim out beyond his depth into a world of beauty and wonder. *The Tree of Life*²⁴ with its exquisite decorations by Artzybosheff is not a book for the "average" child. But what child, wandering among its pages, could grow up with a narrow and prejudiced mind or with a heart that was closed to the aspirations that have moved the human race since the beginning of time?

²⁰By Monica Shannon. Viking, New York, 1934.

²¹By Elizabeth Orton Jones. Macmillan, New York, 1940.

²²By Elizabeth Foreman Lewis. Winston, New York, 1932.

²³By Josephine Blackstock. Putnam, New York, 1942.

²⁴By Ruth Smith (ed.). Viking. New York, 1942.

In Our Next Issue:

JOHN T. FREDERICK, well-known critic and radio commentator, on
"Books About the War"

RACHEL SALISBURY, "Americans Look at Latin America"

C. O. ARNDT, "Suggestions on Books About China"

MACKLIN THOMAS, "Surveying Our Soviet Ally"

KATINKA LOESER, "What Is Happening to the Poets in Wartime"

Poetry-Making with Children

DORIS C. JACKSON

Bronxville, N Y., Public Schools

Very often teachers who succeed in awakening the creative impulse in children find difficulty in reporting their own part in the process. Mrs. Jackson, however, not only provides generous samplings of children's poems, but succeeds admirably in telling how it all came about. She is one of the authors of THEY ALL WANT TO WRITE.

—Editor.

An adult who takes time to listen to little children may be permitted to glimpse that inner world which is the secret place of childhood. What comes out of that world may not be poetry, but it is indeed the stuff out of which poetry is made. It is the expression of the essential quality of the child person—his depth, his color, his sincere reactions.

Freedom Requires Planning

To free children so that they will reveal their innermost thoughts is a matter that calls for careful planning. They must feel sure that such an experience is fun and is free from adult nagging and prodding. Furthermore, they must know that their offerings will call forth no belittling comments from the other members of the class.

One of the first things is to help children tune their ears so that they will appreciate the unique and colorful expressions of others. Creativity begins within a child when he responds to ideas that are fresh and original and true. To bring about this recognition of the individual voice, I read aloud poetic bits. Much of what I use is taken from my

files of children's work. Not only do these child poems have more appeal than poems written by adults, but they also suggest to my children that they, too, might try telling their poetry ideas.

Reading aloud times are very short. They take place when the class is relaxed and I do not have to glare at Johnny because he is restless and wiggly. During the reading we mention any part that "sounded different" or "was a new way of talking about rain, or snow, or fog" or that used picture words. Only a little reading and talking is done each day. Ten minutes when the children are really quiet and listening is far better investment than a longer time when they are not so receptive.

Reading To The Children

On these occasions I read aloud material which has no rhyme because a child's ear often is so captured by the rhyming element that he misses the essential poetry. Then, too, when he tries to make poems of his own, he is likely to forget his ideas and concentrate on the jingle.

Since much of the early lyrical expression of children has to do with natural phenomena, such as night or wind or rain, I read poems like the following, which express a child's wonder in the natural world about him:

Night makes me think of black horses
It looks shiny
Horses run
And so does Night
It's running to its house
To go to sleep

It's tired in the morning
And when I wake up early
I see it hasn't gone home yet
The daylight drives it home.

I like to watch the wind go by
It must get out of breath
I wonder how it floats
And ruffles
And makes all that noise
Many times at night
It wakes me up
With all its tumbling.

Stars are just like flowers
The rays of light
Just look like the stems
And the stems are planted
On the earth
During the night the flowers grow
Bigger and bigger
And in the morning
They're so high above
That the stars
Are out of sight.

In the morning
When I wake up
I see Mother Sun
Come up
First one eye
Then the other
Then her nose
Then I see her
Yawn and stretch
And shine brightly down
On me.

The sun is gone
And the clouds are mad
They are bursting with madness
And what is left of them
Comes down!

Picture Poems

Children enjoy, too, poems which give
make-believe reasons or paint vivid pictures.

The world goes around so fast
And don't forget
It goes upside down, too
I don't know why
I don't fall off
On my ear
When it's upside down
And when I reach the end
I hope I don't have to jump
Very far.

The little grasshopper
Glides from one grass blade
To another
As though he were trying
To commit suicide
By falling on a sword
He doesn't seem to have much luck
But he hasn't come
To poison ivy yet.

Waves sparkle
They look like little bathtubs
With soap suds popping and jumping
Out of them
They break
Sooner or later
Sometimes ducks or sea gulls
Take baths out of them
It looks like they go in
Head first
I'm surprised they don't get soap
In their eyes
Because they never come out
Crying.

Fat Mammy's in the kitchen
Where the pots and pans
Are rattling
Bang!
There goes a dish

Every time Mammy makes a meal
Bang!
Some sort of dish
Is broken
Mammy's not careful
She lives a jittery way.

The moon must get tired
Of his business
Because on rainy nights
He never comes out
That must mean
He's taking a snooze
Under the white clouds
The stars crowd in with him
He goes rolling out
Because he has no room
After he rolls out
He mumbles to himself,
"How greedy those little stars are
They can rest all the time
When I have to sit
Up in my throne
And shine upon the earth."

The wind comes down
In braids
It comes down
Twirling around
On the clouds
When they're low
The rain comes down
In splatters.

We've got a Japanese cherry tree
That grows in our back yard
It glows with pink
And makes a background
For all the other things—
Like a candle in the corner.

Personal Poems

Some of the child poems I read are those
musings or wonderings which reveal
secret thoughts—those thoughts that

little children tell when they are not yet
afraid of being misunderstood or laughed
at. Even though these expressions have
no intrinsic poetic value, they are the
really precious bits, for often they are
dictated by shy, insecure children, who,
through the telling, gain faith in them-
selves and so grow visibly in self-con-
fidence and joy.

Feathers tickle
Why don't they tickle
The hen
They're on his back
So I think
They should tickle him
They tickle ME.

I love to go out riding
But last Sunday
When we went out riding
There were six people
In the car
And that meant
I had to sit up front
Between my brother
And my Daddy
I didn't mind it at all
Except I wished my Daddy
Wouldn't buy my brother
Such scratchy pants
And the candy
Was forever in the back seat
Not in the front
Where it should be.

The moon
Peeps over the hills
I thought it was going to pounce
On me
But when the moon
Goes down
Behind the mountains
It seems to run from *them*
I pretend that they wanted to catch HIM.

I always wondered
 If cocoons were butterflies
 I always wondered
 How they creep out of their shells
 I always wondered
 How they creep along
 I never could see their feet
 I think they do very well
 For their age and how small they are
 I wonder how they learned how to fly
 I think they taught themselves
 Sometimes I wonder if I could fly
 As well as they could.

I wonder why the ships
 Sail on the water
 They bounce and toss
 So much
 I don't see how
 They could stay up
 The sailors like that kind of fun
 They play around on the decks
 And polish the brass
 And then they can have *real* fun
 Taking turns in the crow's nest.

At night
 When I go to bed
 You never would know
 What's going inside my mind
 But it's nice to think
 About all sorts of things
 That nobody would know about
 Except yourself.
 I think and think
 And when I wake up
 In the morning
 You would never know
 That I thought about
 Those things
 And I even don't know
 But the next night
 I try to remember
 And keep the same adventure.

Finding Words For Moods

Along with this appreciation of poetry we experiment freely with putting into words our awareness of what goes on about us. Perhaps, when there is an unusually heavy fog or the first frost covers the ground, we talk about it together. Children respond to changes in weather. They react keenly to the look of a frost-covered lawn, the clink of icy branches, the feel of snow crunched under foot. These out-of-door happenings often establish a mood that fosters the lyrical expression of ideas.

If the time is one when listening and musing come naturally, I may go a step further and say, "See if you can dig down inside your mind and put into words something about the frost. It may be a picture or a make-believe reason for frost or what you think when you touch it. Your words have to be ones that only *you* would think of. You don't have to tell much—just a few words can do the trick. You'll have to keep very quiet inside so your thoughts won't be scared away."

Frequently, when ideas come thick and fast and it is obvious that "digging underneath" is fun, I grab my pencil and jot down what is said. Of course, there is always time afterwards for me to read what I have written. Sometimes we stop to savor the parts we especially liked.

These group-dictating experiences are used only to give a taste of the fun and excitement that poetry-making has to offer. I do not devote much time to them because many children are too shy to voice their personal feelings before an audience.

The poetry thoughts which children share with each other in this manner are never made into a group poem. The emphasis here, as with all poetic expres-

sion, is on each individual's telling his ideas in his own way. Furthermore, what is given at such times may be just picture words or detached phrases, and the reworking of them into a group poem would mean straining to fit the pieces together. What I am working for is natural, effortless child expression.

When it is evident that the children are recognizing glimpses of true individuality or vivid picturings in the poetry of others, I know they are ready to try making poems of their own. Before a dictation period begins, I usually read aloud a few choice selections to create an appropriate mood.

Starting Them Off

Sometimes I add a few comments to help start them off. For example, I remember saying something like this:

"Telling a poem is like painting a picture, only it's painting with words. It's as if you were standing by pots of paint and splashing the color on a paper with rapid strokes before the picture could leave your mind. A story comes more slowly. It has more words and often starts with 'Once upon a time.' But when you tell a poem you plunge right in, and with just a few words you can give a picture or a feeling or a make-believe reason for something."

Another time I remarked, "Poems sometimes tell your hidden feelings. Try telling about your wonderings or your secret wishes."

One time the following comment seemed to open the way for a few of my very shy youngsters:

"Making up poems reminds me of water flowing from a spring that has been choked up. First it is muddy, but after it has flowed for a while, the water bubbles forth clear and sparkling. You'll

find that it's exciting to tell poems. You never know when you are going to get something good, so you have to keep on letting them pour out."

I remember suggesting, "A good time to think of poetry ideas is at night just before you go to sleep when you have that comfortable dozy feeling."

By stressing the fact that it is a quick way of saying something—"Poems don't need all the words that are put into stories. You just hit the high spots"—children are helped to make the transition from the detailed wordiness of a story to the essence-like quality of lyrical expression.

Providing The Setting

The room setting is extremely important. The children and the teacher, too, should feel free from pressure. Quietness and the minimum amount of movement are two essentials. Before dictation begins, I help the children start activities on which they can work alone. Painting or crayoning a picture, modeling with clay, or weaving will keep the hands busy and at the same time permit the child's mind to follow any course it chooses. Not all are busy. Some find that sitting in a quiet corner or looking out of the window helps them to reach that dreamy state in which their thoughts take on the feeling of poetry.

I usually sit at a low table, beside which is placed a chair for the child who is dictating. The table is purposely low, for even the physical set-up must not conspire to place the grown-up in a superior or dominating position. Because the presence of another often inhibits or confuses a child, I make it a point to have this table off by itself. If while someone is dictating to me, another child thinks he has a poem or even the start of one, he raises his hand and I jot down his

name. As soon as possible, I call him up for his turn.

At the close of a period of poetry dictation I always take time to read aloud at least one contribution from each child who has participated. I do the reading because each bit deserves the best possible oral treatment. Not only should every child be given the satisfaction of hearing his ideas read aloud, but attention should be directed toward those parts which have individual flavor. Here is one way of doing this: When all of the poems have been read, I let the children tell which parts made them see pictures or were new ways of telling something that is true. Interestingly enough, it is the worthwhile things they mention—the mediocre expressions will not have made sufficient impression to be remembered.

After poetry dictation is started, it is well to continue it each day for a week or two because it takes time for the deeper and more personal thoughts to come to the surface. During this period it is better not to divert the children's attention by laying stress on story-making or class plays.

It Must Be His Own

Even the best child poems contain only a line or two of unusual beauty or individual sparkle, and a teacher may often feel tempted to weed out mediocre expressions or build up worthwhile bits in an effort to create a more perfect whole. It is well to remember that it is just as dishonest for an adult to change a child's utterances as it is for a child to copy the work of another and call it his own. Moreover, a child is bound to suffer some loss of confidence when a teacher makes

suggestions for the improvement of a poem, or adds a few words of her own to smooth over what she considers to be the rough spots.

Sharing The Poem

Much of the satisfaction which children derive from poetry-making comes when their ideas are read aloud to the class. It is this sharing that seems to insure the on-going-ness of the poetry dictating experiences. When a poem is especially colorful or original in its expression of truth, it receives appreciative comments from the others, but it is never unduly featured. The publishing of an unusual poem in the school magazine or newspaper so focuses the spotlight of attention on it that it takes on the characteristics of a model. Often the child who created it no longer feels free to express his ideas as naturally and joyfully as he did before. It is as though he cannot compete with what he considers to be his own best self. And in many instances, the creative effort of the other children is snuffed out by the demon "competition."

The poem or product is never the all-important thing. The deep emotional satisfactions that children derive from expressing their innermost thoughts are what really count. This is the reason I want children to become acquainted with the power of original expression which lies within all of us. I want them to know that this power is theirs, and to have faith to use it. I want them to dig beneath the clichés of ordinary conversation and accepted patterns of thought to find out what they really do think and feel.

Teaching Latin-American Literature in American Schools'

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World developments have compelled a new interest in the life and problems of our neighbors to the South. Soon our youth will be as familiar with Latin-American history and culture as their predecessors were with that of Western Europe. But teachers need background and guidance of the kind that Miss Hill provides in this article.

Editor

The New World nations are awakening to a new interest in their neighbor republics.

This interest is increasingly focused on cultural relations, whereas it was formerly more concerned with economic and political affairs. The United States Department of State has been so convinced of the importance of cultural exchange as a basis for better Inter-American relations, that in 1938 it established a Division of Cultural Relations under the direction of Ben M. Cherrington. Soon this work expanded to the point of requiring another agency to carry out certain aspects of the work, and in 1940 the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs was created, with Nelson Rockefeller the first and present Coordinator. Among projects initiated by this Office is the Inter-American Demonstration Center Project which is under the supervision of the U. S. Office of Education. With the encouragement of these and other organizations and individuals, the cultural aspect of Inter-

American relations is beginning to flourish in the Americas North and South.

During a global war and the global peace we hope will follow, it is important that Americans be encouraged to think hemispherically as well as nationally. The Americas form one great continent, stretching from Alaska to the Straits of Magellan. This is the New World. Why then should not the study of American literature, history, and fine arts be continental in scope rather than concerned only with the United States and its European backgrounds?

The study of Latin American cultures need not be deferred until high school years. If real appreciation and tolerance for our American neighbors and their relatives who have come to live within our borders is to be developed, it will have to be begun while our children are young. Attitudes of dislike and suspicion for people who are different from us in race and culture may be forestalled by introducing these cultural elements early. We cannot keep children in ignorance of peoples who are different during the most impressionable years of their lives and then expect them suddenly, in the secondary school, to become seriously interested in them, tolerant of their differences, and behaving toward them as good neighbors.

¹An excellent annotated list of children's books on Latin-America, by Marita Hogan and Margaret Yeschko, reprinted from a recent issue of the *Elementary English Review*, is available at the Review office at 15 cents a copy—Editor.

Characteristics Of Latin-American Literature For Children

Most desirable are books and shorter works written by Latin-Americans, either in English originally or translated from the Spanish. Others valuable for their realistic accounts of life in Latin-American countries have been written by North Americans who have lived for some time in the lands South of the Rio Grande.

During the Colonial period of Latin America, literary works dealt with the conquest of the continent and with the Indians from whom it was seized. Mayas, Incas, Aztecs, and Arucanians were among the tribes which claimed the attention of writers. Portuguese and Spanish influence was very strong.

The struggle for independence brought a new emphasis on American subjects, while retaining European traditions of style. Many writings dealt with the lives and exploits of such men as Simón Bolívar and San Martín who were leaders during these times. Among the many poetic tributes to the great "Liberator" is the short poem, *To Bolívar*, by Rafael Pombo, a Colombian poet who wrote much verse for the children of his country. A translation of this poem may be found in *Down South America Way*, by Alice M. Cusack and Alta E. Stumpf.

Argentine writers and artists have produced some delightful works about the gaucho. Of course this colorful character of the frontier is no more found on the Argentine pampas today than is the old time cowboy seen on our Western plains. A delightful long poem about the gaucho is *The Gaucho, Martín Fierro*, by the Argentine poet, José Hernández. The entire poem is published in book form and selections from it are found in *Down South America Way*.

Developing Interest And Understanding Of Latin-American Literature

Stories and poems of Latin America should be introduced at such times as pupils will understand and appreciate them. *The Legend of the Palm Tree* may be presented to children as early as they are interested in Indian children and their legends. Other tales of jungle animals interest children of fourth to sixth grades. Often the reading of Latin American stories and poems accompanies the study of these lands in social studies units. In many schools, type lands and peoples are studied in the fourth grade, with a simple Amazon community being selected as a type of life in a hot, damp, tropical lowland. The continent of South America is often studied in the fifth or sixth grade. A great variety of reading materials are available for children of these levels. "The New World Neighbor Series" (D. C. Heath) contains excellent fiction and nonfiction accounts of life in Latin American countries and regions and is beautifully illustrated. Another richly illustrated set, "The Good Neighbor Series" (Row, Peterson), is in the process of being published, with several volumes already off the press.

Films may be used to interest children in reading about our American neighbors. Recommended are the twenty or more sound films in color released by the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. These are available from university film centers in most states. Such a film as the Hill Towns of Guatemala may be used to interest children in reading about rural life among the Indians. The sophisticated film of Buenos Aires and Montevideo will give insight into the size and modernity of great South American cities.

Art is so closely tied up with the life

of Latin Americans that realia and reproductions should be used wherever possible in connection with reading about Latin American peoples. Legendary characters and stories appear again and again in the art and craft work of these people and should be presented to children at the time they are reading about them in books. Pictures, posters, and maps are visual aids that give a background of understanding most valuable as a prelude for reading about this continent from books. Excellent materials of this type may be secured from airlines, railroads, and foreign tourist bureaus.

Radio is making a magnificent contribution in bringing Latin American musical and dramatic programs to every American home. Weekly listings of radio programs containing Inter-American content may be secured from the Radio Division of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. Children should be encouraged to listen to some of these programs both in and out of school, thus developing their interest and background of experiences with Latin American culture.

Occasion For Use Of Latin-American Literature

Stories and poems of Latin America are very appropriate for reading, choral speaking, and dramatization on Columbus Day. This will help children gain the idea that Columbus is an important figure in the history of the hemisphere and not of our country alone. Pan American Day, on April 14, is being much celebrated in American schools, churches, clubs, and other organizations. The display of flags, reading of stories and poems, dramatization of plays, seeing of films, singing of Latin American songs and listening to recorded music are among the activities

used. Excellent pamphlets on celebrating Pan American Day may be secured free of charge from the Pan American Union.

Examples Of What Is Being Done

Elementary school children in many parts of Texas are not only encouraged to read, write, and talk about our Latin American and Spanish heritage, but are also taught to carry on these activities in the Spanish language. Elementary readers in Spanish have been developed by the teachers of Lubbock, Texas, and are published as the *Juan y Maria* series (Steck Company of Austin). A delightful book of games and songs entitled, *The Spanish-American Song and Game Book* (A. S. Barnes), was developed by the Writers', Music, and Art Programs of the Work Projects Administration of New Mexico. This volume gives songs and games of the Mexican children of the Southwest in English and in Spanish on opposite pages. It might be mentioned here that it is hardly advisable to teach elementary school children to use the Spanish language before they have any understanding of the peoples or countries who use it as their native tongue. However, in regions where our pupils have so many Spanish speaking playmates, it might well be introduced as early as they show interest and need.

In Colorado's 1942 *Course of Study for Elementary Schools*, the entire sixth grade social studies course is devoted to a study of "Our American Neighbors." In connection with this study, it is suggested that children read much of the literature of each region studied in order to gain a better understanding of the people and their culture. A volume is now in preparation which lists the many informational and cultural materials available for the study.

A new bulletin has been developed for the schools of Kansas, under the chairmanship of Leslie Schlagle, in which it is advocated that the study of Latin American literature be included among the school experiences of Kansas children. In this state, this concern for better Inter-American relations is held as an important part of the work of the schools during the period of the war and also for the post war world. This bulletin may be obtained free of charge by writing to the Kansas State Department of Education in Topeka.

Between twenty-five and thirty Inter-American Demonstration Center Projects have been established throughout the United States by the U. S. Office of Education. Each of these has developed different types of experiments and programs in the field of Inter-American education. Many have been concerned with giving children literary and other cultural experiences in their study of Latin America. The U. S. Office of Education publishes an Inter-American Educational Demonstration Center newsletter, which describes the work of these centers and gives their location. Most of the centers have Inter-American instructional materials for loan, exhibit, or distribution.

Suggestions For Primary Grades

Outstanding for children of the second and third grades is *The Legend of the Palm Tree* (Grosset and Dunlap) because of its simplicity and beauty. This legend by Margarida Estrela Duarte and illustrated by the Brazilian artist, Paulo Werneck, was awarded a prize by the Ministry of Education in Brazil. The book is printed in Rio de Janeiro, but published in this country.

The story of *Maria Rosa* (Doubleday, Doran), a little Brazilian girl who goes

to the carnival, will delight young children. The author is Vera Kelsey, who has lived in Brazil four years and who has written several books on Brazil for adults. The illustrations, in large size, are by Brazil's leading artist, Candido Portinari. Older children should be given the privilege of seeing these examples of Portinari's art. Also, they should learn that he is a painter of great versatility, having painted murals for the Brazilian Pavilion of the New York World's Fair and for the Hispanic Foundation section of the Library of Congress, and having painted a great range of subjects from murals to portraits.

Third graders who enjoy Indian and jungle stories will like *Red Jungle Boy* (Harcourt, Brace) by Elizabeth K. Steen. The author has led two expeditions into the Araguayan River region of Brazil where the boy, Dohobare lived. The story is climaxed by his becoming lost in the jungle and his adventures in returning to his home of poles and leaves. Beautiful full-page colored block prints by the author make up half of the book.

The Painted Pig (Knopf) by Elizabeth Morrow tells the story of Pita and Pedro who go to the fair to buy a painted pig. As Pancho, the toy maker, tries to sell them some other toy instead, the reader is introduced to a variety of Mexican toys. Mrs. Morrow, who lived in Mexico while her husband was our Ambassador there, gives a colorful picture of Mexican child life, from first-hand knowledge. Illustrations are by René d'Harnoncourt who owns a beautiful collection of Mexican toys.

In *Manuela's Birthday* (Whitman), Laura Bannon has described the little Manuela who saw an American doll with yellow hair on her first trip to Mexico

City. By means of narrative and picture the author-artist relates the celebration of Manuela's birthday, which is made memorable by the gift of an American doll by her friends from the United States.

In story and picture, Ludwig Bemelmans tells the story of a little Inca baby, Pedro, whom he discovered lost on an Ecuador train. *Quito Express* (Viking) will appeal to third graders who are interested in railroads and the men who operate them.

Suggestions For Intermediate Grades

Down South America Way (Wheeler), prepared and edited by Alice M. Cusack and Alta E. Stumpf, is a compilation of stories and poems of Latin America by Latin American writers of several countries and by a few North Americans, such as Richard Halliburton, who have travelled in South American countries and there learned some of the legends and characteristics of the lands. Vocabulary and sentence structure are suitable for fifth and sixth grade pupils.

Children who like animal stories will enjoy reading about the little burro, Chiquitico, in *The Least One* (Viking) by Ruth Sawyer. The book is concerned with the friendship of the Mexican boy, Paco, with his burro, their separation and the final reunion through the graces of San Francisco, patron saint of animals.

A true story of two Mexican children is told in *Mateo and Lolita* (Houghton Mifflin) by Burr Durfee and Helen and John McMorris. Thirty-four photographs illustrate the activities of these two Mexican children, thereby giving much pictorial information concerning life in our neighbor republic, Mexico.

The Silver Llama (Winston) is an exciting tale by Alida Sims Malkus who describes the adventures of an Indian boy of the Andes, Cusi, and his pet llama. Discovery of a treasure cave is the climax of the experiences these two have in their Andes Mountain expeditions.

A simple story of child life in Costa Rica is told by Zhenya Gay and Pachita Crespi in *Manuelito* (Julian Messner). The close of the story gives an account of Christmas customs in Costa Rica. Miss Gay spent several months in Costa Rica painting the beautiful illustrations which are included.

In *Paco Goes to the Fair* (Holt) the authors, Richard C. Gill and Helen Hoke, describe child life among the Indians of the Andes in Ecuador. Mr. Gill has lived in Ecuador for some time and has run a ranch or *hacienda* in that country. Much of his experience and observation appear in the volume. Illustrations are by Ruth Gannett, who illustrated Steinbeck's *Tortilla Flat* in such memorable manner.

The Cedar Deer (Coward-McCann) by Addison Burbank is the story of a Mayan boy who works on a coffee plantation, but who dreams of becoming a great sculptor. His journey to Guatemala City and his achievement there is told in an exciting manner by the author-artist, who has travelled extensively among the Mayan Indians and who is also author of *Guatemala Profile*.

Sources Of Materials

Inexpensive and free bibliographies, units, source materials, exhibits, and films may be secured from the U. S. Office of Education, the Office of the Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs, the National Geographic Society, and the Pan American Union—all of Washington, D. C.

Learning To Use Context Clues

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In the February REVIEW, Professor A. S. Artley described numerous types of context clues that may assist the reader in discovering the meaning of new words. Dr. McCullough in this article tells of her own studies in this field, conducted over a considerable period, which throw additional light on this important aspect of reading instruction. Her suggestions are directed particularly to the classroom teacher in search of practical help.

Editor.

Given two children of identical reading skill, will their assimilation of the meanings of new words be the same? Or given two children of different reading skill, for that matter? No one has committed himself on this question, but popular practice suggests a general belief that assimilation of the meanings of strange words is something as natural and as inevitable as osmosis. He "gets" the meaning *because* he encounters the word. Picture the imaginary child thirty years hence: bald-headed, round, comfortable in his easy chair, with the latest of the many volumes he has held since the imaginary teacher taught him the love of books. The dictionary, on its handsome stand across the room, lies open to a word which occurred on the income tax blank some weeks before. It is difficult for a round, bald-headed, comfortable man to leave an easy chair. And even though he encounters new words and is annoyed by their presence, he doesn't disturb himself. He thinks his subconscious tells him not to bother.

Actually, "his subconscious" is something his imaginary teacher told him long ago; "If you can't tell the meaning of a strange word from its form, one thing to do is to guess from its use in the sentence." Then, too, he recalls that his sister, a thin, nervous type, has worn out her dictionary in streaks, repeatedly looking up and forgetting the same words. So he guesses; *he depends for vocabulary development upon the one technique in which he received no systematic training.* Is his system effective? Since he never knows whether his guess is wrong, his own system of guessing, effective or not, is never challenged and perhaps never altered.

What do people do when they encounter strange words? A tentative answer has been found in an exploratory study of high school and graduate school students.¹ Each student was asked to give an unfamiliar word encountered in his reading, to tell the sentence in which it was used, to describe the different methods employed to determine the meaning of the word, and then to state whether or not the methods were effective. Methods included word study such as (1) analysis of roots, prefixes and suffixes, (2) noting small words in the larger word, and (3) using the dictionary. One easy method reminiscent of first grade dependence upon the teacher was (4) to ask someone. Use of context clues was represented by (5) the student's guessing from the context in which the word appeared and in (6) his trying to recall in what connect-

¹Unpublished study by Professor Ruth M. Strang, T. C., Columbia University.

tion the word had been previously heard or seen.

Do different people have similar success in attack on strange words? From the same study the suggested answer is that the poorer readers at both levels and the less mature students tend to use only one method and to succeed or fail according to its propriety, whereas the better readers of both levels and the more mature students are prone to use a combination of approaches in ferreting out the meanings of obscure words. In a similar study of college freshmen² it was found that students who depended solely on context achieved results which were anything but uniform. When passages were given in which blanks replaced the strange words, thus making anything but a guess impossible, the students were shown to be unequal in their skill in guessing from context clues and appeared much too often unsuccessful.

The quite unstatistical impression which these studies give is inadequacy of independent attack on word meanings, all too little retention of helpful knowledge of roots, and a very nebulous concept of the context clue. A context clue, to all but the rarest of students, is the fact that the word can be guessed by its use in the context. A question of why or how brings only that bewildered expression of the asylum attendant at the questions of the unbalanced professor.

Most of us have an equally hazy notion of the factors which make guessing profitable. We, too, should enjoy the knowledge of when it would be safe to sit in our easy chairs cultivating our obesity and guess at a word and when it would be necessary to struggle up for the dictionary. Had we, when young, been equipped

²Unpublished study, School of Education, Western Reserve University.

as comprehensively for word meaning attack as we were for word form attack, we should doubtless be wearing larger clothes and weaker optical lenses today.

1. From many excerpts containing words whose meanings students have not known, several types of context clues have been identified. One which might be called *comparison or contrast* is the type in which a word may be accompanied with a simile: "He was as much (*strange word*) as an only child whose security has been challenged by the arrival of a new baby brother." If the simile is sufficiently limited in scope, the meaning of the word can be guessed correctly. If not, as in the above case, in which jealousy, self-pity, resentment, and the like are involved, the guess may easily go astray. In some instances, certain connectives, parallel expressions, and verbs may declare the relationship of the unknown word to the knowns and thus direct the guess: "clean or filthy, hopeful or sad, — or silent"; "noble without melodrama, wistful without —"; "The eagerness of the others was in marked contrast to Hazel's —."

2. Another type is the cliché in which the author, desperately intent upon expressing his own individuality, substitutes a synonym for an outworn member of the phrase: "as hungry as a —," "a lick and a —," "gone but not —."

3. A third is that in which a previous word or sentence establishes a mood or condition which is reflected in a subsequent word: "Feeling exceedingly happy, John whistled —ly along the road." Unless the adverb passes an irrelevant comment on John's whistle as a work of art, the reference obviously is to jubilation.

4. A clue related to the above is the situation which is summarized in a strange word: "He laughed. He danced. He had

never been so gay. He was simply ——." "There were other —— construction jobs: Boulder Dam, Grand Coulee Dam, the Empire State Building."

5. Uses of the synonym or definition as a clue vary: "When he ——ed at her, she wondered why he should stare so boldly." "He was a ——, a person blindly loyal to a lost cause." "The dislike and contempt in Sarah's tone added to their own ——."

6. Often a clue will depend upon our own experiences: "She had an accurate memory for her dreams, which she would relate every day with ——." If we have known people whose memories and interests are fixed upon dreams, we have a hint here of attention to minutiae. However, since the clue also conjures up recollections of the pleasure and fluency with which such people narrate their somnolent adventures, we may perhaps not endow the omitted word, "prolixity," with its proper meaning. A similar dependence upon experience, in this case a physician's knowledge, is requisite for the solution of the following: "High blood pressure with hemorrhage may cause ——." If the physician is too competent, he may think of so many possibilities that no one meaning will result.

7. Sometimes a combination of clues assists meaning: "He was convicted of a —— and sent to Sing Sing." The familiar expression (2), "convicted of a ——," is one clue; one's speaking or living acquaintance with Sing Sing (6), another. If, in turn, Sing Sing were the unknown word, the familiar expression, "convicted of a ——," plus our own experience (6) with regard to the consequences of such conviction would reveal to us the probable nature of Sing Sing.

These observations are the few that

have been made in limited experimentation with students. Others need discovery through exploration by many teachers in many classrooms and in elementary as well as high schools and colleges. It has been manifest throughout these examples that a context clue provides an accurate definition of a strange word only if the clue suggests a single idea or, suggesting several ideas, is reinforced by a further clue which reduces the possible ideas to one. "The drug store will be an ——to the building." Drawing upon (6) experience, one wonders, "Eye-sore, convenience, boon?" But the next sentence (4) explains: "People usually frequenting other centers will be attracted by the presence of the drug store, with consequent benefit to the other commercial interests in the building." A limited meaning of "asset" is apt to result, but at least it will not be "eye-sore." If students could learn common types of clues, practice identification and use of them, and recognize a situation in which the meaning of the word might be any one of several, they would be more efficient in sensing meanings and would know when dictionary reference was necessary.

An auspicious beginning for such study by any teacher would be a pre-test consisting of passages from the books the class would be reading during a semester. Each passage should contain one of the more difficult, crucial words in the course and might desirably represent the types of context clues the teacher has been able to observe in the books. Blanks would be substituted for the crucial words. Each student would be asked to write a description of his attack on the meaning of each omitted word. The guesses on these tests would show the teacher individual differences in ability to derive meaning from

context clues, while a discussion following the test would prove to the students what many of them do not realize, that unsystematic guessing is more often unsuccessful than not, and that context clues are of different types, some of which the students have not learned to recognize or use unaided.

This beginning might lead to a number of activities augmenting the students' awareness of various clues and making students conscious of new words. The teacher herself, meanwhile, would be learning more about kinds of clues and more of her students' vocabulary difficulties.

One such activity could be rotated responsibility for bringing a word in context to the class for solution. Another could be the co-operative search for sentences containing a given word, and class determination of the meanings or shades of meaning intended by the authors. Through many contexts students would grow to appreciate semantic variations as well as profit by clues. In a reverse pro-

cedure the class could select a new word and put it into different settings, each representing a kind of clue which they have learned to recognize. Student explanations of the way in which a clue is to be identified and used are often more helpful to classmates than anything the teacher can propose. Such explanations are, of course, excellent opportunity for practice in thoughtful exactness of expression.

The brevity of the above suggestions is becoming to those who propose chores for other people. But it is also expressive of the hope that teachers will lend their own fertile imaginations to a problem that needs clarification and to an area of education that has suffered too long the lick and the —. Until we disentangle the context clue from the larger consideration of semantics and study it directly with students at all reading levels, we shall continue to engage in a partial program of vocabulary development which sends students home ill-equipped to sit comfortably in their own living rooms.

When Seven-Year-Olds Write As They Please

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Professor Gunderson presents objective evidence in support of the growing practice of encouraging free composition among young children and of promoting genuine language mastery through creative activity.

Editor.

This study is an outgrowth of an experiment carried out with a group of twenty-one children in Grade Two of our University Elementary School, with the co-operation of Professor George E. Hollister, principal of the University Elementary School. It was hoped that a situation in which children wrote only as they wished to do so might throw some light on these questions:

1. How can we effectively help a child to learn to spell words?
2. What is the young child's attitude toward written composition?
3. What topics is he interested in writing about?
4. Do seven-year-old children show a readiness for written language?

Getting Under Way

In launching the experiment, the writer called attention to some of the favorite story books written and illustrated by the same person and made the suggestion that the children might do likewise. They seemed quite eager to do this. Accordingly, scrap books 9 x 12 were made for each child in which he might draw and write anything he wished. A thirty-minute daily period was set aside for this work. Children were encouraged to write their stories at this time when the student-

teacher and supervisor would give help with difficult words. The illustrations might be made at other times during the day also.

At first pictures played the major role in the scrapbooks with stories or themes consisting of but one sentence e.g. "This is an airplane." Gradually, however, the themes increased in length, many to twenty and thirty sentences. The longest theme written was one of 85 sentences (845 words) many of which were complex sentences. By the end of the three-month period during which this experiment was carried on, many scrap books contained stories with few or no illustrations, quite in contrast to the children's beginning efforts and testifying to their growing interest and power in writing.

Because we wanted children's free and spontaneous expression, the themes were accepted as the children wrote them. Praise and encouragement were given freely. From time to time the teacher would examine the scrap books and mark certain pages in each scrapbook to be duplicated for the class folder. The children eagerly watched for this recognition of good work. In this connection many opportunities arose for developing standards as children would frequently ask, "Why didn't you mark this one; it is a long story?" "I thought you'd mark this one?"

Sharing The Stories

Children enjoyed sharing their stories with each other and more and more fre-

quently as time went on, it was necessary to allow more than the usual five or ten minutes a day for reading the themes to the group. Thus the children in reading their themes would discover flaws such as omissions or unfinished sentences and thereby see need for corrections. In order not to dampen their ardor for writing they were encouraged to make only favorable comments about each other's writing. They were generous with praise particularly when a child showed improvement over a theme formerly read or for a theme that was unique, or "different" as the children would say. Humor also had a strong appeal. Only very rarely did any one prefer not to read his story to the group and he was not required to do so. We felt the child should have an adult's privilege, namely, to write just for his own pleasure if he so desires.

To take care of the spelling problem connected with free writing each child had a booklet in which the teacher would write the word the child wanted. Because we wanted to get as much insight as possible into how the children learn to spell, they were encouraged to write the word as they thought it was spelled, or as much of the word as they knew even if it were only the first letter, then get the teacher's help.

Although the children in this group tend to be realistic in their writing all of them wrote both fanciful and realistic material. The total amount of realistic material was 577 themes containing 1770 sentences, and that of fanciful material was 157 themes containing 1051 sentences. The fanciful themes tend to be longer. Only two children wrote more of a fanciful nature than they did of the realistic.

Fourteen of the twenty-one children

used some conversation in their themes. Although the use of quotation marks had not been taught except in a very incidental way in their reading, two children used quotation marks to indicate conversations. Teaching of sentence structure and punctuation had also been incidental only, yet the themes reflect some knowledge of sentences. The use of capital letters is not known as well as the use of periods; the article *a* was used almost exclusively, *an* having a frequency count of only 34. In the themes quoted, the wording and punctuation are the child's. To facilitate reading, all words beginning the sentences have been capitalized and correct spelling of words is given since this particular article is concerned with the thought-content of the child's writing rather than his spelling.

Generally speaking, the sentences tend to be short with the conjunction *and* used surprisingly few times, (the total frequency of *and* was 665 while *the* was used 983 times and *this* 952 times). The following theme written by Stanley is illustrative:

MY PUT-PUT BOAT

I have a Put-Put boat. It runs by steam. It runs around the bathtub. It runs into the sides. It likes to run around in a circle. When it comes to a corner it turns the corner. It puts all the time. It puts by steam. The end.

If quantity of material written is an indication of an interest felt in the topic then one can say that these seven-year-old children are primarily interested in pets and domestic animals:

13 children wrote 111 sentences about dogs
12 children wrote 158 sentences about cats
12 children wrote 185 sentences about rabbits
10 children wrote 122 sentences about mice

This is more than half the material written about animals. Some of these

themes were true records of the children's own pets, but more was fanciful material with frequent references to the Easter Rabbit and Mickey Mouse.

The following is John's record of his pet chickens written over a period of several days. The average length of his themes was four sentences. It is probable that the sustained interest and attention in writing a theme of this length is due to either or both a greater interest in or familiarity with the subject.

We got two chickens. We have them in a box. One of the little chickens got cold and then he would not move. Mother wrapped the chicken in a cloth. Then he got warm. Now we can take them out in the sun. We feed them every day. We feed them grain and egg and water. They like the food. We clean the box every day. Mother clipped their wings so they wouldn't fly. We used to keep the temperature at eighty.

This summer we are going to the farm. We have a place for the chickens. We are going to take the chickens with us. Each chicken is four inches tall. One day Mother gave the chickens some crackers. They had a fight about it. Now they like to roost on the side of the box. Mother is going to put a wire across the top of the box so they won't fly out of the box. The chickens are getting combs now. They're losing fuzz.
John D.

When writing fanciful stories about pets and animals the children showed a tendency to write about them as though they were human beings. The following are illustrative:

THE STORY ABOUT A BUNNY RABBIT

Once there lived a rabbit. Her name was Bunny Rabbit. She lived in a nice cozy house. One day she jumped out of bed. It was snowing. Oh dear she said I can't go for a walk today. So she made her bed and went downstairs and ate breakfast and then turned on the radio. All of a sudden she looked out the window. It was not

snowing. She jumped for joy. Then she got on her coat and hat and went out for a walk and then she lived happily ever after.

Kay

Once there was a little bird. It woke up and went downstairs and ate breakfast. After breakfast she listened to radio then she washed her hands and went to bed because she didn't feel well and here she is.

Anne

(picture of bird in bed)

This is a story about a duck that wouldn't wash his face. He would make a face if his mother would try to wash his face. He would cry and scold. He would tear his books.

Patty

Some themes written by this group of children follow the pattern of familiar stories such as going away to seek one's fortune, the Easter Rabbit, and stories of princesses. These are examples:

A HAPPY EASTER FOR BUNNY BOY

It was Easter Eve day almost time for lunch. Bunny was busy dyeing Easter eggs. It was his turn to be the Easter bunny. He had a new coat and hat and he had some new shoes.

"Bunny" that was his mother calling him to come and eat his lunch. He had soup for lunch. After lunch he put the eggs in a basket. Then he went to bed. He got up early. He went to all the little boys and girls. When he came home he said I had a happy Easter.

Nancy

THE STORY OF THE PRINCESS

Once upon a time there was a princess. She lived in a lovely castle. Once a prince came to her. He loved her. She loved him. They were married and they lived happily after that. Here they are.

Carolyn

Effects Of War Upon Interests

Parents and educators have been much concerned over the effect the war may have on the mental health of children. The fact that war ranked third (Table I) in the amount of theme material attests to the interest this group of children feel

TABLE I
Amount of Material Devoted to
Different Topics

Classification	Number of Sentences	Percent
Animals	973	34.4
Children	715	25.3
War	249	8.8
Special Days	125	4.4
Literature	120	4.3
Nature	116	4.1
Fairy	115	4.1
Humor	102	3.6
Toys	70	2.5
Travel	68	2.5
Verse	50	1.8
Family	25	.9
Cowboys		
Indians	19	.7
Nations	11	.4
Miscellaneous	63	2.2
Total	2821	100.0

in war. The several types of aircraft outrank all other implements of war, but also frequently mentioned are: battleship, cannon, ship, soldier, submarine, tank, and transport. Typical themes are: "This is a bomber." "The American plane is bombing the German plane." "This is a U. S. bomber. It shot down two Jap planes." In all war themes the U. S. is on the offensive and is victorious. As one child puts it "The Japanese airplanes are getting the works." Judging from the themes, it is the action and excitement of war that interest the children. The two themes which follow illustrate widely different ideas about war as expressed by seven-year-olds:

This is a American house. When the boys hear bad news they go out and attack the Germans and Japs. When they get back they eat their dinner. Then they go out and march again. Then they come in and put their clothes in their suitcase. Then they go to their mother and father again.

Tommy

In contrast note this, which in its stark reality is almost a photograph and may have been seen in movie:

The war started. The Germans and American are having trouble. Airplanes are crashing. Men shot and towns are bombed. Women and children are shot.

Joan

Although 17 children wrote about war, three children (boys) contributed 69 percent of the entire material of which these themes are typical:

This is a U-boat. It is sending out torpedoes.

This is a American battleship. It is attacking 1 Japanese plane 1 German plane. (Pictures of ship and planes)

This is a American boat shooting German destroyers.

(Picture of ships and planes)

Two-fifths of the entire material on war was written by Jerry. He devoted two-thirds of his scrap book to themes on war. One of his themes is given below:

THIS IS A STORY ABOUT A BOY

By Jerry

Once there was a boy. He was called to the army. After three months he was not a plain soldier. He was promoted to a private first class. After six months he got a furlough. After he got back from his furlough he went back to the army and got promoted to a corporal. He liked his army life. After three more months he was promoted to a sergeant and after one month he was called to foreign duty. After two years he was brought back to the United States and he got promoted to a captain and last a General.

The themes listed under Nation are on flags, maps, and Red Cross with one on Uncle Sam:

Uncle Sam Uncle Sam

We're going to win

Goody goody we're going to win. Uncle Sam is the greatest man in the world.

Ann

Themes on *Special Days* center around Christmas and Easter. A few were written about Valentine Day. Of *Nature* topics, flowers and gardens receive the most attention. The season (spring) in which this study was conducted may have influenced choice of subjects.

In frequency count, the *airplane* outranks other methods of travel with *car* next in order. Several children showed an interest in the *ambulance*. On a recent excursion to the fire station, they had seen an ambulance and had asked many questions about it.

The Element Of Humor

It is interesting to observe the seven-year-old's sense of humor as expressed in these:

Once upon a time there was a mouse that was always sad One day a old man came He said May I have a drink She laughed and laughed She knew that her father said you didn't have to ask for a drink of water

Patty

Once there lived a rat He was so fat that he couldn't move. One day he wanted to go to town but he was too fat He was too fat so he rolled to town.

John D

This is a funny house that no one ever lived in but you know very well that isn't true and it's a silly silly house

Billy

Once there was a mouse who couldn't get out of his home. So he saw a axe and chopped down the door. And now he could go in and out and he's a whopper. Paul

This is a funny picture

The funny picture is a horse

Darrell

Sometimes the humorous borders on the scary or horror side although Darrell said as he was writing these: "This is a funny one":

Once there was a mouse He lived in the woods One night after he went to bed he saw two eyes looking at him He jumped

up and down and kicked off his covers It was only Mrs. Mouse coming in the door She saw little mouse jumping She said What is the matter He said I thought you were a pig Said the mouse Well Well

Once there was a silly man. This man was [swastika] man One day he got shot When they buried him he climbed out of the grave and went walking down the street. This is the man. (picture of man)

Darrell

Seen again and again in these themes was (1) a happy ending or return to normalcy and (2) a feeling for justice, punishment and suffering inevitably following errors and misdeeds. Frequently the punishment consists of being lost, and the theme ending with "After that he was good."

Once there was a donkey. He would kick people. One day he saw a picture of a painted man on a brick wall He thought Well there is a soft place to kick. I will kick him into the sky. So he got ready to kick. He kicked. Ouch! Ouch! Ouch! I am never going to kick people again never again never again never again.

Carl

A BAD DOG

Once there was a dog.
He was a bad dog
He always chased cats
He never liked his home
One day he got lost
Then he came back
After that he was good

Delano

Once upon a time there was a girl named Pat. She was bad. Everyone hated her. Once she ran away away down town. She got lost. Her mother looked for her. Her father looked for her. A policeman looked for her. They found her. After that she was a good girl. This is Pat (picture of girl)

Carolyn

This is about Jack Jack was a bad boy He threw rocks at people and made them cry Then he got a nice little spanking Then he was a good little boy ever after

Billy

Once there was a little mouse He was
always squeaking His mother tried to make
him shut up but he would not stop squeak-
ing so his mother put him to bed.

Ralph

The following are illustrations of fanci-
ful stories on miscellaneous topics:

THE TWO LIONS

Once there were two lions They were
walking in the park one day One fell down
He said I broke a bone So that was the end

Larry

THE BEAR

He was very tame He was Mr. Mac-
Gregor's pet One day he stepped on some-
thing sharp and the doctor just had to
come and he was dead

Larry

SOME LUCK FOR LITTLE DUCK

Well now said little duck I think I'll go
looking for that magic stone So out he
went He went everywhere in gardens too
He went back home and started to climb
a tree and what do you think he saw? The
magic stone in the tree My but he was
happy He reached for it jumped down
from the tree and ran to show his mother

Nancy

The longest theme was one of 85 sen-
tences and divided into two chapters with
chapter headings. It tells about a fairy's
visit to two children. Part of the first
chapter is given below.

THE GOOD FAIRY

Chapter I

MARY AND DICK

Once there was a sister and brother
Their names were Mary and Dick. One day
they were playing tag At last they got
tired and sat down to rest. Suddenly Dick
saw a wee light. He looked again. There
was a wee lady They stared at each other
for a long time. Then at last Dick spoke
and said "Who are you" then she answered
"I am the good fairy Dick looked surprised
for a minute then he said "Where did you
come from" "Well Son that is a long story"
she said. "It will take too long to tell."
By that time Mary was awake "Who are
you she asked "She is the good fairy" said

Dick "A fairy" said Mary and she looked
very much surprised.

Polly

Only three children attempted verse
writing:

One night I looked up into
the starry sky and oh
there was a beautiful
blanket of stars The moon
looked like the king

Nancy

Snowflakes
Who knows
Who makes
the snowflakes?
I know
Oh! Oh!

Nancy

I WISH

I wish sometimes I had a dog
To help me take to my father this log
I wish sometimes I had a cat
To catch a few mice and one big rat
And sometimes I wish I had a pig
So in my garden he could dig
But what would be best would be a cow to
milk (even though I don't know how)
To have milk every day
In winter and even May

Polly

Summary

While this study is too limited in
scope to draw significant generalizations
therefrom, some findings of interest are:

1. Young children write more about
pets than about any other topic. These
themes are not limited to the children's
own pets but are about pets (rabbits, cats,
dogs, mice) in general.

2. These children were more interested
in writing about other children than
about themselves. They wrote in the
third person more frequently than they
did in the first person. *I* had a total fre-
quency of 352, *me* of 51, while the pro-
nouns *he*, *she*, and *it* were used 605, 359,
and 301 number of times respectively.

In their oral language, on the other
hand, this same group of children in the
daily news period in which they tell

things they feel are of interest to their group, talk about themselves, their experiences, and their families more than they do about other topics. This is similar to Dawson's¹ findings in a study she made of children's conversational topics. She found that children in Grade III talk most frequently about games and sports, next in order were personal experiences, with pets and their tricks ranking third.

3. Young children are just as likely to write fanciful material as realistic, but the fanciful material is more abundant in written than in oral expression.

4. The themes written by this unselected group of children show evidence that many seven-year-olds have wide interests; are ready for written language; and have a wholesome attitude toward it. Writing in their scrapbooks and reading library books were the popular choices when children were given the privilege of choosing their work.

5. The comments made by children regarding spellings of words show that through their writing the children are developing a spelling consciousness.

6. Because children have a need for words in their writing, they have a strong motive for learning them. Since young children are not expected to be able to spell all words used in their writing, they do not hesitate to ask for help nor do they take a second-best word because they cannot spell the preferred one; they do not feel the stigma attached to inability to spell that older children may feel and therefore substitute another word. For young children the form of words is subordinate to thought e.g. 4 is used for four, and 1 for one.

7. Writing provides an excellent op-

¹Mildred A. Dawson, "Children's Preferences for Conversational Topics," *The Elementary School Journal* (Feb. 1937), 37:429-437.

portunity for children to learn the meaning of words. Often when children ask how to spell homonyms, it is necessary for them to define them or use them in sentences so that the teacher will know which spelling is desired. To the child his own sentence is much more meaningful than any that can be dictated to him as a definition or illustration of meaning, e.g. One child's request "Is this (there) right for *their* house?"

8. Children's comments regarding words show the importance of correct pronunciation, e.g. "Is this (diddy) right for *did* he?"

9. As observed in this study, writing seems to appeal to the extrovert and introvert alike. The most prolific writer was a quiet child who took no part in oral language, but ranking next in amount of material written were several children who took active parts in all discussions and activities.

10. Perhaps the most significant contribution made by this study is the challenge to teachers that young children are ready for written expression and should be given opportunities for doing so.

When we recognize that thoughts and ideas have even greater value than correct spelling and usage we may reconcile ourselves to accept children's themes as they write them and base the training for "correct usage" thereon. May not children's themes be the material through which they learn correct usage and spelling?

Dare one venture the prophecy that in the not too distant future we shall look back upon teaching lists of words as a way of learning to spell and as a foundation for written language in the same way we now feel about the alphabet and the word methods of teaching to read?

Creative Expression in the Language Arts

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Miss Duboc sets forth a sound basis for the elementary school language arts program, assigning equal emphasis to the potentialities of the individual and the demands of modern society.

Editor.

The Language Arts

What are the language arts?—The answers of schools to this question are diverse and confusing. A common response is expressed in terms of subjects or of the various courses offered and these are numerous. A few recent classroom schedules yielded a list of over fifty course names. These titles ranged all the way from the old standbys, such as grammar, spelling, and literature, in one school, to such offerings in other schools as skills, corrective English, integrative English, sharing, appreciations, free expression, creative reading, creative writing, and reading for fun. The invention of new names for courses and class periods has been going on at an astonishing rate. One wonders how many phases of the English language could be identified. It would also be interesting to learn how teachers and administrators interpret the words *language* and *English*.

A simple analysis of language at work in ordinary living outside of school suggests the importance of a broader view of the language arts. The popular act of listening over the radio furnishes one of the many possible illustrations of a nor-

mal activity. When one examines the language requirements of this act, it is discovered that all of the major language activities are involved, directly or indirectly: the impressional activities of listening, reading, and thinking; also, the expressional activities of speaking, writing, and thinking.

The force that draws most persons to the radio is usually a desire to secure information or enjoyment through listening. The freedom one has to select the special program in which he is interested is a powerful factor in the success of this instrument. Freedom means self-guidance; it may not be wise guidance, but it is a self-determined power. The type of program chosen will, as a rule, depend upon the taste that the listener has developed, his past experiences, and his auditory vocabulary. During the process of listening, attention is concentrated on the total situation or on particular ideas which the listener himself selects; seldom is he aware of the separate language activities involved, so closely associated are they in the integrated whole.

The behavior that follows the listening is significant. The housewife is experimenting on new recipes given, men are buying shaving cream or the vitamin pills advertised. Old and young are attempting writing that never before interested them; they write an advertisement or a story for a contest that was explained by the broadcaster, or they send him a

statement about their own hobbies, or they try their hand at radio script. Publications dealing with life in foreign lands have increased at an amazing rate in recent years. The radio has helped to create a favorable market for these reading materials. Programs of Bach and Beethoven led a twelve-year-old boy to read the lives of those great musicians. Children and adults consult the diacritical markings in the dictionary to check on the broadcaster's pronunciation of a word; they are reading a map or globe to locate a battlefield mentioned or to find out its latitude.

Two points need more emphasis. One is the complexity of each of the language activities and the importance of recognizing their interrelationships. Skill in listening is so vital a factor in reading that tests of reading readiness include tests of auditory acuity, auditory span, and auditory fusion. Oral reading, which is a form of speech, involves silent reading, manipulation of materials in the hand, and other skills. A man is held responsible for the writing of a letter when he dictates the content to a dictaphone, although his stenographer does the rest of the work. Thinking is fundamental to all other language activities. In this process, an individual talks silently to himself, or speaks silently to an invisible audience, and all the while he listens to his own inner speech.

The second point concerns non-verbal forms of language. A concept of the language arts and the possibilities for creative expression is dwarfed unless there is insight into the relationships of the verbal and the non-verbal forms of language. One may elucidate the other or one may motivate the employment of

the other. Human beings do not limit their ingenuity to verbal compositions. Seldom do people prefer to hear even a great singer without the accompaniment of one or more non-verbal instruments. The charm seems to lie, not in the separate performances, but in the total, integrated effect. It is not verbal language alone that enables man to span time and space, to visualize the unseen, and to understand the past. Costly museums and great art galleries, in which may be seen actual specimens or pictures of other lands and other days, are monuments to man's hunt for effective non-verbal instruments to supplement the verbal. Civilized man has developed elaborate systems of non-verbal language which are essential in the world's business; e. g., signs, sirens, codes, shorthand, tabulating machines, architectural blueprints, works of art, instrumental music, camera, and, most significant of all, mathematics, without which there would be no science, engineering, and modern transportation.

No formal definition of *language arts* would satisfy all persons. Yet language is commonly recognized as more than a matter of precision, form, and niceties, however essential these may be. The most vital aspect is the intangible, internal: ideas, operations of the inner sense organs, and impulses to try one's wings in flight. Language is not compared to a tool of cold steel, but to the delicate harp, whose music depends upon the artistry of the performer; it may send forth harsh notes or heavenly music. The language arts involve far more than subjects, courses, and tasks. Rich and varied impressional activities are of supreme importance; they are Nature's device for learning. All activities of children during the day are concerned with language development.

Creative Expression

What is creative expression?—The core of the meaning of the word creating seems to center about the idea of originating or inventing a production that is one's own and is unique. The phrase *creative expression* usually directs attention to the obvious phase of creative endeavor; that is, to the finished product: the original poem, story, drama, song, object constructed, and so on. These products are only the external, objective evidence that the process of creating has taken place. For the child's sake the school should be inquisitive about the process of creating, and not the product alone. For his future efforts, it is worthwhile to learn the nature of the message that he was trying to communicate, how he feels about it, and the part that trial and error may play. Possible sources of help may then be discovered. Creative expression is dependent upon keen power of observation, fertility of thought, and depth of emotional experience.

Children begin life with exploratory tendencies. In early preschool years, a child invents words and tunes to accompany them, is inquisitive to the extent that he bores many adults, pries into every corner, and is altogether a bundle of curiosity; he even runs away from home in a desire to see the rest of the world. It is the environment, not nature, that confines youth's efforts within narrow bounds. Life is many-sided and children, if allowed to do so, would investigate it from many angles; inventiveness would exhibit itself in various ways. Year by year, children lose a large share of that buoyancy, inquisitiveness, and eagerness to learn that were once their precious possessions. The question is whether or not this process takes place at a far greater rate than is necessary and to the

detriment of a democratic society. This is one of the most pressing problems for consideration today. The cause does not lie in the school alone, for frequently its ideals run leagues ahead of popular demand.

The School's Part

What provision should the school make for creative expression in the language arts?—The problem of the school should never be stated as "creative expression versus routine and organization." In a desire to shake off the shackles imposed by an extreme regimentation, a school often goes to the other extreme of having so little guidance of conduct and activities that there is more or less a chaotic condition in every room and confusion in the minds of children and their teachers, all in the name of freedom. The interesting fact is that the children themselves criticize this lack of system and order. They like a certain type of routine. Preschool children often practice routine in the arrangement of certain pet toys or articles packed in the little suitcase for a trip. Somewhere between these two poles lies the type of school that is sought by those who believe in encouraging resourcefulness, ingenuity, self-guidance, and social ideals.

There is a third type of school that offers great handicaps to children who are capable of a high degree of skill in creative expression. It is the one in which rugged individualism among teachers reigns supreme; the superintendent administers as many school systems as there are teachers in it. A child is torn continually in his efforts to adjust himself to conflicting demands and varying standards of achievement and behavior, as he passes from grade to grade. These are some of the desirable activities that are

observed in one room: a child writes poetry voluntarily, he finds the teacher always willing to read what he writes in out-of-school hours and to make helpful suggestions; he contributes to original class plays; he is chairman of the spelling committee; he thinks of the handwriting class as an opportunity to increase his own skill in penmanship and to receive suggestions on how to write his science experiment; the teacher has a listening ear for the questions he asks about natural phenomena, or eternity, or himself; he has no occasion to think of language as a subject or a task. In the next grade, routine is master; a child is rebuked for the very language activities that were previously encouraged; the eternal group work has only semblance of a social situation; he is a failure, in his own estimation.

Routine and system have a place in the life of every individual, as well as in society. Systematic health habits in infancy lay the foundation for health in later life. Sports are governed by rule. Certain social conventions help a person to be more acceptable in society. Nobody desires to have the radio give up its definite schedule and be governed by the whims of the broadcasters. It is in the vast fields of application of mathematical principles and operations that inventive

genius plays its part. It would be well if there were fewer vast chasms for children to bridge between practice in the mechanics of language and their attempts at originality in expression. One of the crying needs is for a broader view of language and the language arts and a *school* program in which every teacher, including the administrator, is a teacher of language.

Individual differences should be considered an asset, not a liability. Life would be dull indeed if uniformity and mass production were to control social standards. This freedom for which millions of young men are offering their lives in battle, and millions of others are suffering mental torture, is more concerned with things of the spirit than food and raiment. Normal human beings die with only a small portion of their potentialities developed. Man has never given himself a chance to utilize to the full his own natural resources, so busy has he been with external matters. A school cannot create interests and desires, but it can supply situations, materials, worthy goals, and companionship which will be very likely to induce them and direct energy into desirable channels. Opportunities for creative expression are one type of safety valve in social behavior.

Word-Recognition Difficulties of Second Grade Pupils

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University of Dakota

THIS STUDY was made to determine if possible, what words caused the most difficulty to the pupils in the second grade so that advanced instruction which might possibly prevent the difficulties could be provided. The words selected were those found common to fifteen or more primers out of a total count of thirty. There was one additional word, Jane, which was not common to the fifteen or more primers, but was included to make selection more interesting. These 203 words were woven into story form. Three-fifths of the words in the selection occurred only once, about one-fourth twice, and the balance from three to seven times each. The pupils, an un-

selected group, attended rural one-room schools, consolidated and village schools, and city schools. All the testing was done either during the last two weeks of November or the first two weeks of December. This meant that the pupils had been in school approximately from two and one-half to three and one-half months of the school year.

Each pupil was given a copy of the story and told to read it orally. As the pupil read the selection each unknown or mispronounced word was checked by the teacher on another copy of the selection. Seventeen hundred pupils were checked. The results were as follows:

WORD	PER CENT OF DIFFICULTY	WORD	PER CENT OF DIFFICULTY	WORD	PER CENT OF DIFFICULTY	WORD	PER CENT OF DIFFICULTY
fire	44.9	sat	19.4	could	14.6	had	12.2
find	39.8	there	19.4	name	14.6	pretty	12.0
over	36.1	once	19.2	water	14.5	took	12.0
flew	34.5	bread	19.1	lives	14.3	white	12.0
hears	33.6	call	18.4	soon	14.3	nest	11.8
heard	33.1	with	17.8	ways	14.3	are	11.7
sits	33.0	after	17.5	but	14.2	say	11.3
now	32.2	help	17.4	coming	14.2	comes	11.0
lived	31.3	shall	17.2	fast	14.1	he	10.9
gave	28.5	wants	17.2	were	14.1	have	10.8
wind	28.4	from	17.0	this	13.8	them	10.8
please	27.6	saw	16.6	cake	13.6	four	10.7
knows	26.5	how	16.5	who	13.3	eyes	10.6
wanted	26.2	likes	16.5	as	13.2	its	10.6
head	24.1	again	16.4	gets	13.2	no	10.6
tells	24.1	fun	16.3	back	13.1	when	10.6
sings	23.7	got	16.3	must	13.1	asleep	10.4
would	23.6	they	16.2	tail	12.9	I	10.3
met	23.4	what	16.0	that	12.8	if	10.2
found	22.4	chair	15.8	let	12.7	cows	10.1
night	22.1	makes	15.8	or	12.6	did	10.0
ate	21.0	thank	15.5	wee	12.5	then	9.8
very	20.9	under	15.5	am	12.4	going	9.6
where	20.9	has	15.4	hen	12.4	three	9.6
may	20.8	here	15.4	made	12.3	we	9.6
stop	20.1	gives	15.3	an	12.2	takes	9.5
why	19.6	us	15.2	called	12.2	came	9.4

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WORD	PER CENT OF DIFFICULTY	WORD	PER CENT OF DIFFICULTY	WORD	PER CENT OF DIFFICULTY	WORD	PER CENT OF DIFFICULTY
some	9.4	times	7.4	sun	5.3	two	3.3
jumped	9.3	ride	7.2	door	5.1	was	3.2
green	9.2	eat	7.1	you	5.0	dogs	3.0
all	9.1	me	7.1	big	4.7	eggs	3.0
apples	9.1	looked	7.0	good	4.4	into	3.0
her	9.1	at	6.7	bed	4.3	little	2.9
runs	8.9	Jane	6.6	man	4.2	not	2.9
went	8.8	Jack	6.3	milk	4.2	ran	2.8
do	8.7	up	6.3	for	4.0	red	2.6
him	8.7	his	6.2	looks	4.0	trees	2.6
your	8.7	my	6.2	children	3.9	too	2.5
black	8.4	old	6.2	plays	3.9	yes	2.5
morning	8.4	window	6.1	father	3.8	a	2.1
so	8.3	sleep	6.0	be	3.7	go	2.1
the	8.2	away	5.9	days	3.7	rabbit	2.1
hill	8.1	blue	5.9	pig	3.7	sees	1.9
put	8.1	and	5.8	in	3.6	jump	1.7
will	8.1	bow-wow	5.8	house	3.5	mother	1.6
by	8.0	doll	5.7	is	3.5	girls	1.3
fly	8.0	one	5.7	yellow	3.5	grass	1.2
birds	7.8	oh	5.6	can	3.4	to	1.0
home	7.7	down	5.5	cat	3.4	she	0.9
on	7.5	of	5.5	said	3.4	boys	0.7
out	7.5	baby	5.3	brown	3.3		

While no general conclusions can be drawn from the study, the results indicate that some words evidently are learned with some difficulty. Or, if learned, for some reason are quickly forgotten. There is some evidence that the instruction in phonics was not functioning as it should. If it were, then why should *its* be known by ninety per cent of the pupils; and *sits* by only sixty-seven per cent? *An* was not known by 12.2 per cent of the pupils; *man* by 4.2 per cent; *can* by 3.4 per cent and *ran* by 2.8 per cent. *Now* caused

twice as much difficulty as *how*. Yet *bill* and *will* were unknown by exactly the same number of pupils.

Some of the difficulty may be attributed to limited reading materials and library facilities. No attempt was made to check the methods of reading used in the schools. Perhaps this should have been done. The study does give some information about the words that may cause most difficulty and this should assist the primary teacher in planning the reading so that these simple words will be learned by the pupils as soon as possible.

Looking Backward at Childhood Books

MARY CLAY HINER
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IN REPORTING a collection of adult judgments in regard to children's interests in books, I have limited the field to books of fiction read between the ages of nine and fifteen. The list is based on memories of childhood reading rather than any knowledge of what children are enjoying today. The tabulation includes preferred childhood books of 1,000 entering students in a college for women—over a period of ten years (1930 to 1940). Each student was asked to make a list of the ten books of fiction she had most enjoyed between the ages of nine and fifteen, and of any books she remembered disliking. A comparison of these preferences with those of an earlier generation of college women reveals fewer differences than one would expect.

The results of the study show that the whole group had read all the books within their reach, and they liked all they read. They all confessed having liked the sentimentality in the books, the pathos, and the bathos. They liked adventure, mystery, new experience; they liked also the Alcott books with their pictures of everyday life of boys and girls like themselves. They enjoyed fairy tales too, and books written in poetic language.

The most significant thing about the list, however, is the fact that because there were not enough suitable books available they were forced by their hunger for reading to read books that were too old for them. Fortunately there is a

wealth of good books for children today that are being made accessible—books that satisfy the ever-avid young readers at each level of experience and interest.

The qualities liked by the two groups whose preferences have been noted have much in common. The reasons the younger generation is offering today for their enjoyment of particular books are identical with those of the older generation—with the possible exception of the sentimental one! The young woman of the 1930's has had a wider variety of books to choose from, and has been able to extend her mental horizon far beyond that of her mother and grandmother through the multiplying list of excellent books about children all around the world—about life in the present and life in the past. The fundamental interests, nevertheless, persist, and the best of the old favorites can still be enjoyed.

FAVORITE CHILDHOOD BOOKS OF 1,000 COLLEGE STUDENTS* (1930 - 1940)

	Number Reporting
Alcott, Louisa M.— <i>Little Women</i>	740
Twain, Mark (Clemens)— <i>Tom Sawyer</i>	458
Defoe, Daniel— <i>Robinson Crusoe</i>	440
Carroll, Lewis— <i>Alice in Wonderland</i>	418
Twain, Mark (Clemens)— <i>Huckleberry Finn</i>	306
Harris, Joel Chandler— <i>Uncle Remus</i>	302
Spyri, Johanna— <i>Heidi</i>	291
Alcott, Louisa M.— <i>Little Men</i>	283
Sampson, Emma S. (and others)— <i>Miss Minerva</i> Books.....	266
Stevenson, Robert Louis— <i>Treasure Island</i>	255

* Compiled from lists of the ten books most enjoyed between the ages of nine and fifteen; books mentioned by fewer than five students are omitted from the list.

	Number Reporting		Number Reporting
Grimm and others—Fairy Tales.....	251	Hawthorne, Nathaniel—House of Seven Gables....	30
Sewall, Anna—Black Beauty.....	243	Dickens, Charles—Oliver Twist.....	30
Rice, Alice Hegan—Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch.....	212	Blackmore, Richard D.—Lorna Doone.....	30
Porter Eleanor—Pollyanna.....	192	Bible Stories.....	30
Hope, Laura Lee—Bobbys Twins Series.....	159	Barrie, James M.—Peter and Wendy.....	28
Porter, Gene Stratton—Freckles.....	148	Twain, Mark (Clemens)—Prince and the Pauper..	28
Fox, John—The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come..	143	Baum, L. Frank—Oz Books.....	27
Dickens, Charles—David Copperfield.....	137	Bunyan, John—Pilgrim's Progress.....	27
Johnson, Annie Fellows—Little Colonel Series....	134	Hawthorne, Nathaniel—The Scarlet Letter.....	26
Barrie, James M.—Peter Pan.....	131	Perkins, Lucy F.—Twins Series.....	26
Burnett, Frances Hodgson—Little Lord Fauntleroy	129	Longfellow, Henry W.—Courtship of Miles Standish	25
Eliot, George—Silas Marner.....	123	Hughes, Thomas—Tom Brown's School Days.....	23
Bannerman, Helen—Little Black Sambo.....	119	Hale, Edward Everett—Man Without a Country...	23
Page, Thomas N.—Two Little Confederates.....	117	Porter, Gene Stratton—The Magic Garden.....	22
Porter, Gene Stratton—Girl of the Limberlost.....	109	Alcott, Louisa M.—Under the Lilacs.....	21
Francis, Hildegrade G.—Campfire Girl Series.....	109	De la Ramec—Dog of Flanders.....	20
Alcott, Louisa M.—Old Fashioned Girl.....	106	Kipling, Rudyard—Jungle Books.....	19
Fox, John—Trail of the Lonesome Pine.....	105	Irving, Washington—Legend of Sleepy Hollow...	19
Mulock, —Little Lame Prince.....	101	Appleton, Victor—Tom Swift.....	19
Montgomery, L. M.—Anne of Green Gables.....	100	Austin, Jane—Pride and Prejudice.....	18
Anonymous—Arabian Nights.....	99	Longfellow, Henry W.—Evangeline.....	17
Wiggins, Kate Douglas—Rebecca of Sunny Brook- Farm.....	98	Pyrrnelle, L. C.—Diddie, Dumps, and Tot.....	17
Burnett, Frances Hodgson—The Secret Garden.....	91	Thorndyke, Helen Louise—Honey Bunch.....	16
Pyle, Howard (and others)—Adventures of Robin Hood.....	91	Porter, Gene Stratton—Keeper of the Bees.....	16
Malory, Thomas—King Arthur and His Knights.....	90	Hough, Emerson—The Covered Wagon.....	16
Tarkington, Booth—Penrod.....	84	Alcott, Louisa M.—Eight Cousins.....	16
Finley, Martha—Elsie Dinsmore Books.....	67	Habberton, John—Helen's Babies.....	15
Wiggins, Kate Douglas—Bird's Christmas Carol...	67	Alger, Horatio—Any Books.....	15
Tarkington, Booth—Penrod and Sam.....	66	Bailey, Temple—Contrary Mary and others.....	15
Tarkington, Booth—Seventeen.....	66	Guerber, —Greek and Roman Mythology.....	14
Dodge, Mary Mapes—Hans Brinker.....	61	Alden, Raymond—Why The Chimes Rang.....	14
Anderson, —Fairy Stories.....	73	Stevenson, Robert Lewis—Kidnapped.....	14
Swift, Jonathan—Gulliver's Travels.....	73	Dickens, Charles—Old Curiosity Shop.....	13
Sidney, Margaret—Five Little Peppers and How They Grew.....	70	Burroughs, Edgar Rice—Tarzan Books.....	12
Porter, Eleanor—Just David.....	59	Lofting, Hugh—Doctor Dolittle.....	12
Bronte, Charlotte—Jane Eyre.....	56	Eggleston, Edward—Hoosier Schoolmaster.....	11
Irving, Washington—Rip Van Winkle.....	56	Poe, Edgar Allen—Gold Bug.....	11
Dickens, Charles—Christmas Carol.....	55	Martin, George—Emmy Lou, Her Book and Her Heart.....	10
Stowe, Harriet Beecher—Uncle Tom's Cabin.....	55	Richmond, Grace S.—Red Pepper Burns.....	10
Wyss, Johanna Rudolph—Swiss Family Robinson..	54	Emerson, Alice B.—Ruth Fielding Stories.....	10
Barrie, James M.—The Little Minister.....	51	Barclay, Florence L.—The Rosary.....	10
Collodi, D.—Pinocchio.....	50	Mulock, A.—Adventures of a Brownie.....	9
Webster, Jean—Daddy Long Legs.....	49	Hawthorne, Nathaniel—Tanglewood Tales.....	9
Montgomery, Frances T.—Billy Whiskers and similar animal stories.....	48	Kingsley, Charles—Water Babies.....	9
Dickins, Charles—Tale of Two Cities.....	45	Browning, Robert—Pied Piper of Hamelin.....	9
Alcott, Louisa M.—Jo's Boys.....	43	Hill, Grace Livingston—The Enchanted Barn.....	8
Porter, Gene Stratton—Laddie.....	43	Ferber, Edna—So Big.....	8
Cooper, James Filmore—Last of the Mohicans.....	43	Cooper, James Filmore—The Spy.....	8
Ruskin, John—King of the Golden River.....	38	Canfield, Dorothy—Understood Betsy.....	8
Johnston, Mary—To Have and To Hold.....	37	Bulwer-Lytton—Last Days of Pompeii.....	8
Hope, Laura Lee—Bunny Brown Series.....	35	Grover, E. O.—Overall Boys.....	7
Aesop, —Fables.....	33	Church, Story of the Odyssey—Homer, The Odyssey (Revised for boys and girls).....	7
Keller, Helen—The Story of My Life.....	33	Grey, Zane—Any Books.....	7
Ford, Paul L.—Janice Meredith.....	32	Dumas, Alexander—The Three Musketeers.....	7
London, Jack—Call of the Wild.....	31	Winfield, —Rover Boys Series.....	7
		Kipling, Rudyard—Just So Stories.....	7
		Aldrich, Thomas Bailey—The Story of a Bad Boy..	7
		Burnett, Frances Hodgson—Sara Crewe.....	6
		Doyle, A. Conan—Sherlock Holmes.....	6

A Pilgrimage To The City

DORA T. COLVILLE

Tullytown School
Tullytown, Pa.

Mrs. Colville here shows how reading, speaking, writing, group planning, and appreciation of the theatre may be interestingly combined in an exciting annual trip to a neighboring city.

Editor.

Each year the sixth grade pupils of Tullytown School go on an excursion to Philadelphia, twenty-eight miles away, to witness a series of children's plays produced by the Clare Tree Major Children's Theatre Guild. Among the plays that have been enjoyed by our group are: *Hansel and Gretel*, *Toby Tyler*, *Little Men*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp*, and *Pinocchio*.

The first attendance of the plays came about through a poster on the bulletin board announcing the coming schedule for the year. An interesting story which had been read in class was to be presented. Now the yearly poster from the Guild stimulates the interest of the group, which begins at once to talk about the coming trip. Sufficient enthusiasm thus aroused leads to:

1. Organization of the group for the purpose of raising money. The most successful attempt during past years has been a rummage sale of old toys and books, which members of the school and the community supply, and later purchase.

2. Selection of a leader or President, and a Secretary and Treasurer.

3. Appointment of the following committees to carry out the sale:

- a. Publicity Committee—Written an-

nouncements requesting old toys, dolls, books, are prepared by the pupils. Usually this first step is correlated with language work. The group judges and selects the best compositions. The children writing the most informative announcements are chosen to take charge of the advertising by reading their announcements during chapel period or at some convenient time when the whole school is together. Thus, a means of encouraging oral expression is also obtained.

- b. Poster Committee—This committee is selected by the group for outstanding ability in art. Posters concerning the time and place of the sale are prepared and posted in various points in the community.

- c. Supply Committee—This group collects the articles from the other children of the school or from the neighborhood.

- d. Repair Committee—This committee is composed of girls and boys whose duties are to: Paint toys, mend books, wash or clean games, toys, dolls, sew dresses or other garments, supply lost parts of games or toys where possible.

- e. Sales Committee—This group sets prices, and sells goods. In groups of two, alphabetically, every child takes part in selling the toys after they have been made presentable for the sale and properly priced. Groups serve for a week, selling during recess periods and after school hours. The entire responsibility of receiving payment for an article, making change, encouraging buyers is taken by the two individuals, who give a record

each day to the treasurer with a summary of the weekly receipts at the close of their duties.

Finally the aid of the parents is sought, through the Parent Teacher Association, which contributes a donation towards the expenses. The total expense usually amounts to \$2.20 for each child. This includes the ticket for the play, luncheon, and train fare.

When the financial problems are settled, other problems are considered. If the class is large, it may be divided and two trips planned. In this way two plays can be seen. Sometimes, with a large group, the girls and boys choose their performances separately. With a smaller group the whole group votes on the particular story which the children would like to see dramatized.

The following discussions always have a place before taking the trip:

1. Safety—city traffic, pedestrian signs, responsibility to safety leader and teacher.
2. Good manners—on trains, at lunch, at the theatre, on the street.
3. Nutrition—a discussion of the best choice of food.

The children select their own lunch from a menu supplied by a Philadelphia department store, which arranges a private dining room for the children. The menu is ordered in advance by the school, so

that the group can be served immediately, as the afternoon is spent in visiting historical buildings and places of interest.

Such points as the following are chosen for visits: Independence Hall, the Betsy Ross House, Benjamin Franklin's Grave, Old Christ Church, the Atwater Kent Museum. The expectation of visiting these historical shrines brings out a discussion on the life and customs of people during the Revolutionary War period, the place of our own community in that period, and the historical value of studying it. Pictures of the various buildings are found in textbooks, library books, magazines and newspapers, and aid in visualizing the places to be seen. The children often bring family keepsakes and other materials related to this period of history, and an exhibit is prepared. A list of suitable material for outside library reading is placed on the bulletin board to further evoke interest.

By working together in all subjects, evaluating each other's work, visiting classrooms and the community for supplies, earning their money, carrying on discussions, reading books, magazines and newspaper articles, and studying visual materials, the group develops more co-operative ways of thinking and feeling, gains an understanding of the foundations of American democracy, and achieves a finer social appreciation of classroom and community life.

Remedial Reading in a Semi-Rural School

CHARLES KYKER

Bernard School, Johnson City, Tennessee

MANY READING problems are caused by inadequate first teaching. With a poor start, reading difficulties tend to increase and accumulate at a rapid rate as the child progresses through the grades. In rural and poor communities children often lack wide preparatory pre-reading experiences, and the teachers seldom give enough time to building an adequate background before granting formal reading.

Recently an experiment in the East Tennessee program for improving reading was conducted with twenty-one poor readers in Bernard School, located in a semi-rural mill community in Washington County. There are six rooms and eight grades in the school, taught by six full-time teachers and one half-time teacher. The enrollment for the school year reached over two hundred and fifty students, and, as three of the rooms are small, crowded conditions prevailed.

The children who received remedial instruction were chosen on the basis of standardized reading tests and teachers' estimates. Vision, hearing and intelligence tests had also been given to all children in the school. To the children needing remedial reading, tests were given to determine their reading status, and a group of twenty-five were chosen for more thorough diagnosis. The average intelligence of this group was found to be normal, I Q 99.1. The following tests were used for diagnosis: vision, checked with Bett's Telebinocular with

visual sensation and perception forms to determine the efficiency of two-eyed vision; hearing, checked with an audiometer; intelligence, tested by Dearborn Intelligence Tests IA and IIC; reading rate and comprehension on Monroe's Standardized Test; and reading difficulties, found with the Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty Tests. The Durrell analysis is a composite test of aided and unaided recall in oral and silent reading, word recognition and analysis, phonetic skills, spelling and handwriting. Each test has a check list of difficulties.

The Principal Difficulties

The reading defects most frequently found in this group of twenty-five children were:

- Poor vocabulary
- Poor methods of word attack
- Word-by-word reading
- Habitual repetition of words
- Ability to spell but not pronounce words
- Sounding aloud by single letters
- Ignoring punctuation
- Lip movements
- Poor phonetic ability
- Inadequate experience background

It is interesting to note that the defects common to this group are purely pedagogical. The possibility of low intelligence as a factor in learning to read occurred in only four cases, but those children were not seriously subnormal since their I Q's were 88, 87, 86 and 85 respectively. No serious visual or audi-

tory defects were found in this group. This is a more-or-less typical picture of the defects usually found among the reading problems in our schools. The difficulties children have in learning to read are more often due to poor instruction than to physical and mental handicaps.

Remedial Devices

The children were classified according to the most common deficiencies shown in the test results. At the beginning there were five groups with five students each, who received thirty minutes of remedial instruction each day. These five groups were given the following remedial reading helps for twenty-three weeks:

- Easy reading materials,
- Motivated drill on unfamiliar words before reading
- Read-O games played individually and with groups
- Flash cards of unfamiliar words
- Drill on meaning of words, phrases, clauses and sentences
- Methods of word attack

- a. picture clues
- b. configuration clues
- c. contextual clues
- d. phonetics
- e. prefixes
- f. suffixes
- g. word-within-word

New words discussed and learned before reading

Audience reading

Charts to motivate and develop vocabulary

Supplementary reading materials selected in terms of an overlapping vocabulary

Individual records of errors and progress

Letters and words, which children tend to reverse, traced and written

In cases of low intelligence,¹ wide reading of easy materials

Recognizing and using punctuation marks

Pronunciation of parts of words and blending parts to make whole words

Eliminating lip movements, index finger or pencil placed in mouth

An effort was made to integrate history, geography, art and other subjects by having the children make posters, friezes, charts and drawings as the ideas were developed from their reading. The reading room was attractively decorated with the children's contributions as well as with other material conducive to reading. Pupil interest was aroused by discussing with them their respective difficulties and encouraging them to improve their reading. The teacher used every occasion to help the children build up confidence in themselves. Individual and group contests were used as a means of motivation.

Results Of The Instruction

1. Every child benefited from the instruction from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2.3 school grades in reading level with an average gain for the group of 1.5 grades. 2. With the exception of six, all the children reached or excelled their normal grade level. 3. The results of this experiment substantiate other investigations which have found that the dull child makes successful reading progress when proper instructional methods are used. 4. Reading difficulties are largely pedagogical and may be prevented or corrected by improved instruction. 5. Remedial work can be successfully carried out by classroom teachers who are willing to familiarize themselves with diagnostic and remedial methods.

¹ Why for pupils of low intelligence only?—Editor.

The Educational Scene

An annotated reading list on China, including books about the Chinese people, Chinese civilization, Old China, and the current scene in China and its background, is published by the East and West Association, a non-profit, non-political organization having as its purpose the interpretation of countries East and West through their peoples, in order to promote a better understanding between the peoples of North and South America and the peoples of the Near and Far East and Australia. Offices of the association are at 40 E. 49th Street, New York City. The cost of the China bibliography is twenty cents each.

Professor C. O. Arndt has prepared an annotated list of available units, courses of study, and other curricular material dealing with the Far East in general. The pamphlet, called *The Far East*, is available without charge at the U. S. Office of Education.

A reprinting of New York State's excellent course in elementary English, called *English Handbook for Teachers in Elementary Schools*, first issued in 1940, has just appeared. Reading lists, lists of tests, suggestions for reading instruction, the management of the school newspaper, and materials for radio and photoplay appreciation, are among the resources included in the volume. Miss Helen Heyl is chief of the Bureau of Curriculum Development.

What should be our attitude toward the comics? Dr. Ruth Strang and her Columbia University class in the im-

provement of reading recently studied this problem through interviews with children in Grades I through XII. In her report of the study, which appeared in the February, 1943, issue of the *School Review*, Dr. Strang summarizes the arguments for and against the comics, lists the children's preferences, and cites their reasons for liking or not liking them. She concludes with these recommendations: Adults should advocate moderation rather than total abstinence. Comics often stimulate an initial interest in reading and lead to the reading of books which, although of increasingly better quality, have the comics' appeal of adventure, surprise, plot, life-like characters, humor, and action. The dissenting educator, according to Dr. Strang, should institute a positive program for the improvement of the comics and utilize them as an avenue of education.

In the same issue of the *Elementary School Journal*, Professor Harold Saxe Tuttle discusses "Obedience: A Necessary Convenience." The writer distinguishes between obedience to laws in the enactment of which one has had a part, and obedience to the arbitrary command of a parent, even a loving parent. Obedience to parent or teacher is not a virtue in itself, but an essential convenience to shield one from danger or save one from wasteful experiments. In a democracy obedience should be recognized as a means rather than an end, as merely a temporary convenience to the child rather than a satisfaction of the impulse to be master of a situation.

Also in the February issue of the *Elementary School Journal*, an issue of particular interest to the language arts teacher, is a discussion of the guidance approach to remedial teaching, by Elizabeth H. Harris. Miss Harris stresses the importance of the child's attitudes in achieving success in reading. Frustration and humiliation, common experiences among retarded readers, may be a primary factor in continued failure to make progress. Of particular value in the guidance program is the effort to cause the child himself to see the need for continued application and persistent practice in reading. The teacher should seize every opportunity to give the child that sense of accomplishment which the poor reader so often lacks. "Remedial teaching cannot be done for the child or to him; it must be done *with* him if real improvement is to be made."

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Number 6 in the pamphlet series, "Education and National Defense," published by the U. S. Office of Education, is entitled *What Democracy Means in the Elementary School*. The booklet, which contains many helpful suggestions for making democracy operative in the elementary school in wartime, sells for 15 cents a copy.

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"Education for Victory" was selected as the general theme for the 1943 observance of American Education Week at a recent meeting in Washington of representatives of the four national agencies which sponsor this observance—the National Education Association, the American Legion, the U. S. Office of Education,

and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. The complete program follows:

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

1943

OFFICIAL PROGRAM

General Theme: Education for Victory

Sunday, November 7

Education for World Understanding

Monday, November 8

Education for Work

Tuesday, November 9

Education for the Air Age

Wednesday, November 10

Education to Win and Secure the Peace

Thursday, November 11

Education for Wartime Citizenship

Friday, November 12

Meeting the Emergency in Education

Saturday, November 13

Education for Sound Health

—○—

The following statement has been released by the N. E. A.:

The Executive Committee of the National Education Association, being fully conscious of our country's problem of transportation during this critical war period and being desirous of co-operating in every way with our Government, has cancelled the regular summer convention of the Association which is usually attended by many thousands of teachers.

As it is necessary for the Association to organize for the greatest possible service in the war effort and to plan ways in which education can best contribute to the peace that follows, a meeting of the Representative Assembly will be held at Indianapolis the latter part of June. At this meeting the regular business of the Association will also be transacted.

Review and Criticism

A SUPERB REVISION

Educators and librarians in 1938 thankfully approved Eloise Rue's comprehensive and scholarly time-saver publication, *Subject Index to Readers*. Instructors in teacher-training courses know well the long hours and close application required in the compilation of even a brief bibliography on such a reading interest as "airplanes." Prospective teachers often copy these accurate and inclusive lists of references calmly without full appreciation for the author's work.

But in 1939 every educational publisher with one accord, it seemed, either revised his readers, indexed so recently by Miss Rue, or put out an entirely new series! The heyday of beautiful textbooks, surpassing in quality those they replaced, had arrived, but the *Index*, as far as these newcomers were concerned, rapidly became outmoded.

The 1943 revised edition of *Subject Index to Readers*¹ not only classifies the

¹Subject Index to Books for Primary Grades, Compiled by Eloise Rue. Chicago: American Library Association, 1943. Pp. 236. \$2.50.

selection in the most recent series of readers but includes more types of reading material. Like its companion volume: *Subject Index to Books for Intermediate Grades*, 1940, the new edition of the volume for the primary grades indexes the many picture, song, and story books with which the teacher and children enrich their experiences on subjects introduced in the readers.

The "List of Books Indexed," covering about twenty-five pages, provides expert suggestions of titles for first and second purchase by small libraries. The selections in the complete list are rich and varied and mindful of the needs of the four to five year-olds, as well as those in grades one to three.

The organization of items, references, cross-references, and symbols is simple, clear, and adequate.

ALTA M. TURK

Chicago Teachers College

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

[The brief reviews in this issue are by Pearl Drubeck]

Struggle Is Our Brother. By Gregor Felsen. Dutton, \$2.00.

The simple story of the courage, resourcefulness, and love-of-land that characterize the Russian people in their fight to defend themselves against enslavement. Mikhail is a Russian farm boy who has been reared on a collective farm near the

Amsov dam by his Cossack parents. He loves his fields, his horse, his songs, but best of all he loves the gleaming white dam built by Russian and American engineers. The dam is the joy of all the workers on the Collective. It provides water for their beautiful wheatlands and it symbolizes for them the freedom, dig-

nity, strength, and self-confidence that the new Russia has given them. So that when it becomes apparent that the Amsov dam will have to be destroyed to prevent its being used by the invaders, the civilian members of the Collective organize into guerilla bands to harass and slow up the enemy, and at the propitious moment, though with great sadness, to blow up the dam.

This is a beautifully told tale that will appeal to children of the upper grades. Mikhail, his sweetheart Anna, and their friends are home-loving farmer folk whose ingenuity in frustrating the enemy and slowing up his progress through Russia is effective simply because every Russian boy and girl, man and woman, of every age is a soldier fighting his nation's total war against fascism.

Twenty Modern Americans. By Alice Cecilia Cooper and Charles A. Palmer. Harcourt, Brace, \$2.00. *Successful Women.* By Isabella Taves. Dutton, \$2.50.

A success story today that emphasizes individual achievement rather than social usefulness, is likely to receive a tepid response from modern adolescents. In *Successful Women* Isabella Taves, a recent college graduate, tells about contemporary women who have achieved prominence through a combination of ability, aggressiveness, and the right "breaks." Miss Taves interviewed each of the women and was obviously impressed with the glamour associated with the commercial success of each, without troubling too much about the factors that have made them successful. She is satisfied that the "Be smart, work hard, and know where you're going" formula is infallible, and implies that the careers of her selection

of successful women are examples of what every girl can achieve if she sets her mind to it.

Alice Cooper and Charles Palmer in *Twenty Modern Americans* have selected such prominent personalities as William Beebe, Henry Wallace, Pearl Buck, and others who have sought success, not through power and popularity, but as Oliver Wendell Holmes says, thru the "trembling hope that one has come near an ideal." The authors do not evolve a success formula but they tell simply and understandably the stories of the lives of these persons with some interpretation of their personal and social ideas.

The book that still remains to be written for children, however, is the real-life story of successful Americans who have never achieved power, fame or popularity, but who are making their great contribution to the general welfare of our nation—the farmer, the stenographer, the school teacher, the factory worker. This type of book should be a challenge to writers of success stories.

Half A Hemisphere. By Delia Goetz. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.50.

With the increasing interest in Inter-American relations and the new emphasis in all levels of the school system on understanding our Latin neighbors, this book is timely in presenting material on the subject suitable for children of the upper grades. The author has a sympathetic approach to the historical development of the countries of South America and the Caribbean, emphasizing in her story the struggle for freedom and independence in each country, down to the present time.

Kutkos, Chinook Tyee. By Mildred Colbert. Heath. \$1.12.

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For grades 7 to 9

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Mildred Colbert, a teacher of Portland, Oregon, and well-informed about the Chinook Indians of the Northwest, has written a charming and whimsical story of a brave Chinook chief and his people, their daily lives, struggles and successes, but especially their beautiful mystic legends. The language of the book is poetic in its simplicity and children of intermediate and upper grades should find it a welcome addition to their readings on American Indians.

The Tree Of Life. Edited by Ruth Smith. Illustrated by Boris Artzybasheff. Viking, \$3.50.

A book that should help children of all ages understand the undercurrents of thought and culture of people of all faiths. The author presents selections of prose and poetry from the literature of the ancients illustrating the philosophy of the various ethnic and religious groups.

Her selections are excellent reading in themselves for the young reader, and, in addition, thought-provoking for older readers. The drawings by Artzybasheff are an addition to the book but there are too few of them.

Your Career in Engineering. By Norman V. Carlisle. Dutton, \$2.50.

The engineer has come into his own in the present mechanical-war-minded world and, more and more, boys are turning toward engineering as a vocation. Norman Carlisle makes his book strictly a vocational guide with careful attention to the qualifications, education required, and job offerings in each of the major divisions of engineering. The book has good reference bibliographies, photograph illustrations, a list of engineering schools and a complete index. It should be useful in Career classes and in Vocational Guidance offices.

One Life to Lose. By Amy Hogeboom and John Ware Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, \$2.00.

This story of the life of Nathan Hale and his part in the American Revolutionary War presents a different picture from the book, *Oliver Wiswell*, by Kenneth Roberts. The courageous patriots willingly sacrificed the life of ease to which their Tory neighbors clung at the cost of their independence. The rebels were not the raggle-taggle nondescripts of Roberts' book. Many, like Hale, were educated and talented young men. The authors have made Nathan Hale and his friends real people, who, one by one, left their homes and work to do their part in the cause of liberty. The story is simple,

easy reading and should be suitable for slow readers in the upper grades.

Gateways to American History. By Ellen McCracken Carpenter. H. W. Wilson, \$2.25.

The present nation-wide interest in improving the teaching of reading in schools includes the development of reading ability in all subject fields. For this reason, "Gateways to American History" is a timely aid to social studies teachers in that it presents synopses of all types of historical books, with comments on the suitability of each for various reading levels. The author has examined over 6,000 volumes, and of these recommends two hundred or more that are especially useful for slow readers.

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